AL-MIZAN

AN EXEGESIS OF THE QUR'AN

BY: ALLAMAH AS-SAYYID
MUHAMMAD HUSAYN AT-TABATABA'I

VOLUME 1

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

Al–Mizan: An Exegesis of the Qur'an

:Writer

Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai

:Published in print

World Organization for Islamic services

:Digital Publisher

Ghaemiyeh center of computerized researches

Contents

Al–Mizan An Exegesis of the Qur'an, Volume ۱

ID book

Author(s): Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba and ۰۳۹;i

Translator(s): Allamah Sayyid Sa and ۰۳۹;eed Akhtar Rizvi

(Publisher(s): World Organization for Islamic Services (WOFIS

Category: Qur’an Commentaries

Topic Tags: Exegesis Tafsir

Person Tags: Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabatabai

ISBN: ج.۹۷۸:۱۳-۹۶۴-۶۵۲۱-۴۶-۹ ؛ دوره ۹۶۴-۶۵۲۱-۱۳-۵ :

Congress Classification: BP۹۸/ط۲۵م ۹۰۴۹۵۲ ۱۳۹۴

Dewey Classification: ۲۹۷/۱۷۲۶

National bibliography numbers: ۳۸۲۱۵۷۸

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عنــوان و نــام پديــدآور : Al-Mizan : an exegesis of the Qur'an/ Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i; Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

وضعيت ويراست : 1st ed.

مشخصات نشر : Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, ۱۹= ۱۳ -

مشخصات ظاهری : ج.

وضعيت فهرست نويسی : در انتظار فهرستنويسی (اطلاعات ثبت)

يادداشت : فهرست نويسی بر اساس جلد پنجم، ۱۳۶۲=۱۹۸۳.

شماره كتابشناسی ملی : ۴۰۱۸۶۸۷

point

From Suratul Fatiha (١) to Suratul Baqarah (٢), verse ٩٣The first volume of the renown commentary on the Qur'an written by one of the greatest commentators on the Qur'an in modern times. This volume contains the exegesis of Suratul Fatiha (١) and .Suratul Baqarah (٢) to verse ٩٣. Translated by Allamah Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi

Foreword

The late Islamic scholar, thinker and philosopher, al-`Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i (al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i) came from the celebrated Tabataba'i family of Tabriz. For the last three centuries, this family has produced generation after generation of renowned religious scholars in Azarbayjan (Iran). They are descendants of the second Imam, al-Hasan ibn `Ali (peace be on both of them). .The clan is also referred to with the title, al-Qadi

Al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i was the son of as-Sayyid Muhammad ibn as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i. al-`Allamah was born in Tabriz on ٣٠/ ١٢/ ١٣٢١ A. H. (١٧/٣/ ١٩٠۴ C. E.) . His father died in ١٣٣٠ (١٩١٢). The orphaned child grew up in Tabriz, and after completing the religious education there, in circa ١٣۴١ (١٩٢٣) he went to an-Najaf .al-Ashraf (Iraq), the most important centre of the highest Shi'ah religious learning

In an-Najaf al-Ashraf, he began his higher studies with such illustrious scholars as ash-Shaykh (al-Mirza) Muhammad Husayn (son of Shaykhu 'l-Islam al-Mirza `Abdu ('r-Rahim

Na'ini al-Gharawi (۱۲۷۷/۱۸۶۰-۱ - ۱۳۵۵/۱۹۳۶) and ash-Shaykh Muhammad Husayn (son of al-Hajj Muhammad Hasan, Mu'inu 't-Tujjar) Isfahani (۱۲۹۶/۱۸۷۸ - ۱۳۶۱/۱۹۴۲).

These two, together with ash-Shaykh Diya'u 'd-Din (son of Mawla Muhammad) `Iraqi (۱۲۷۸/ ۱۸۶۱-۲ - ۱۳۶۱ / ۱۹۴۲) are held in the highest regard in the Shi `ah world. They were among the most prominent scholars not only in the fields of the Shiite jurisprudence and the fundamentals of jurisprudence, but in all Islamic subjects. The opinions they expounded and the theories they established have been followed by all those who came after them.

Each of them founded his own school of thought. They trained thousands of Shi `ah scholars and jurists; and all the maraji `u 't-taqlid of the Shi`ite world, to this day, are their students. The Isfahani was a philosopher, unsurpassed in his time, a man of literature and a good poet of Arabic and Persian; he was a genius whose achievements made others to look upon him as their ideal. The Na'ini has carved for himself a niche in the history because of his bold opinions and decrees in the political and social life of the Muslim ummah.

al-`Allamah at Tabataba'i was much influenced by these two teachers, (and especially by the Isfahani) in the development of his thoughts and knowledge. A third influence was of as-Sayyid Abu 'l-Qasim Ja'far (son of as-Sayyid Muhammad al-Musawi) Khwansari (۱۳۱۳/۱۸۹۵-۶ - ۱۳۸۰/۱۹۶۱), known as "the mathematician." al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i was proud of learning the mathematics from him.

Also, he wrote a book on some

topics of higher mathematics, applying therein some special theories of his teacher. The book is mentioned in adh-Dhari `ah, vol, ii, pp. ۲۳۲ - ۲۳۳. He learned philosophy and metaphysics from as-Sayyid Husayn (s/o as-Sayyid Rida s/o as-Sayyid Musa-) al-Husayni (۱۲۹۳/۱۸۷۶ - ۱۳۵۸/۱۹۳۹) of al-Badkubil a well-known teacher of philosophy and .related subjects in those days

In ethical and spiritual field, he received his training from his relatives, as-Sayyid (al-Mirza) `Ali Agha (s/o al-Mirza Husayn al-Qadi) Tabataba'i (۱۲۸۵/۱۸۶۹ - ۱۳۶۶/۱۹۴۷), a well-known divine who established a school of spiritual and ethical training which is .flourishing to this day

All those influences combined in al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i to create in him a well-balanced academic and spiritual personality. A well-respected authority on religious subjects of jurisprudence and its fundamentals; a philosopher of independent views and various new theories; an inspired model of ethical and spiritual perfection, who not only taught morality but lived it - this was al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i. Yet it will be correct to say that his scholarship was overshadowed by his fame and prestige as a .philosopher and a spiritual man

al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i returned to Tabriz in ۱۳۵۳ (۱۹۳۴) where he was welcomed as a religous scholar. There he spent his time teaching higher philosophy to willing disciples - but it was a small place for his talents. In ۱۳۶۴ (۱۹۴۵) he migrated to Qum, the .most important centre of religious education in Iran

In Qum, he remained engaged in imparting knowledge of ethics, philosophy and exegesis of the Qur'an to the students who had

already attained to a high level of erudition. There he remained till his death on .Sunday, ۱۸/۱/۱۴۰۲ (۱۵/۱۱/۱۹۸۱). May Allah bestow His mercy on him. Amen

Many religious leaders of the present generation were and are among his students and disciples, the most famous being the late Murtada Mutahhari (۱۳۳۸/ ۱۹۲۰ - ۱۳۹۹/ .(۱۹۷۹

al-`Allamah at Tabataba'i's fame rests on his various academic works - the , most important being his great exegesis of the Qur'an, al-Mizan fitafsiri'l-Qur'an. It may correctly be said to be the foundation stone of the academic prestige which al-.`Allamah at-Tabataba'i was accorded in the Muslim world

Among his other works is Usul-e falsafah wa rawesh-a realism (The Fundamentals of philosophy and the Doctrine of Realism). This book is a comparative study of Islamic philosophy and various modern anti-Islamic schools of thoughts, especially the Marxism. His disciple, late Murtada Mutahhari, wrote footnotes and explanations to .this work, thus making it easily comprehensible to the average man

A third book Shi`ah dar Islam (Shi`ah in Islam), was first published in Persian; later it was published in English also, with the title: Shi`ite Islam. This book is based on al-`Allamah's discussions with Professor Kenneth Morgan of Colgate University, held in .the summer of ۱۳۸۴ (۱۹۶۳) about Shi'ah and Shi'ism

However, it is the tafsir, al-Mizan (published in Arabic in ۲۰ volumes) which presents the true picture of the author's academic taste and his way of thinking. Before starting this work, the author made a detailed plan to explain the Qur'an with the

help of the Qur'an itself; and he faithfully fulfilled this pledge upto the end of the book. .He has outlined this scheme in his Preface, in volume one

It was a grace of Allah that He inspired us a few years ago to prepare and publish a tafsir of the Qur'an in English. We wanted it to be a tafsir that would help the reader to understand the divine Book and its verses, as much as practically possible - a tafsir that would bring its sublime meanings and divine themes nearer to the human mind; would explain the context in which the verses and chapters were revealed, would cover the points that are necessary for understanding its meaning and fully com… prehending its import - all this without ignoring the Tradition of the Prophet and his .Ahlu 'l-bayt (as) in arriving at the final conclusion

On the other hand, we wanted it to be in sympathy with the mentality of the present day's readers, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, looking at the problems that boggle their minds and the questions that demand responsible and knowledgeable answers - .to the extent it is related to the Qur'an and its explanation

After much deliberation, we found that tafsir, al-Mizan, satisfies our both .requirements to a great extent

So, seeking the help of Allah, we decided to get it translated in the English language. Even before embarking on this work, we were fully aware that it was a gigantic task; we understood that the responsibility would be heavy

and the efforts to bring this scheme to completion herculean; the expenses would be .huge and the difficulties himalayan

We knew all of it, and our only weapon was, and is, our reliance on Allah. We sought His help to make our dream come true; and to help us reach the end goal and prepare and publish the complete set. A few years ago, we entered into an agreement with someone to translate the first volume; but he did not fulfil his promise, although we .gave him all the time and facilities - and even more - that were needed for it

At last we requested al-`Allamah ar-Radawi to take this important responsibility on his shoulders, and we are thankful to Allah that al-`Allamah ar-Radawi fulfilled his .promise

We have written in short about al-`Allamah as-Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi (s/o as-Sayyid Abu 'l-Hasan [۱۳۰۹/۱۸۹۱ -۱۳۹۴/۱۹۷۴]) in the preface of his book, The Family Life :of Islam, in which we, inter alia,wrote

Sayyid Rizvi is one of the most sincere preachers of Islam and an active scholar, both when he was in Tanzania in the Bilal Muslim Mission (an Islamic organization active in Tanzania), and also now that he has returned to his own country of India. In the way .of spreading Islam he has rendered enormous services and has been most active

al-`Allamah Rizvi has written scores of books and booklets in English, Urdu and Swahili, many of which have been published; and we have given in the above-mentioned preface some titles which

p: ۶

have been published by us. Some of his books have been translated and published by .us in French,. Italian, Japanese, Thai, Indonesian, Hausa and some other languages

Here we must express our thanks to him for the efforts he has made and the difficulties he has overcome in rendering al-Mizan into English. The original Arabic book is replete with academic terms of all disciplines, Islamic as well as non-Islamic, .and with philosophical discussions related mostly to metaphysics

The learned translator has discharged his trust faithfully and conveyed the original idea into English truthfully. What you find in your hands is the true rendering of what al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i wrote in Arabic. The translator has written some footnotes .where he thought it necessary - without altering the original text in any way

We left the entire responsibility of the translation in the hands of the translator, relying on his erudition and knowledge of Arabic language, philosophy and Islamic subjects and his long experience in rendering purely Islamic esoteric ideas into a .western language like English

Now he is personally responsible for the English translation, just as al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i (may Allah have His mercy on him!) was personally responsible for the explanations of the Qur'anic verses, and the general discussions he wrote in his tafsir, .al-Mizan

:We have prepared two lists for this book

١. Names of the authors referred to in the twenty volumes of al-Mizan.

٢. Names of the books which need a somewhat detailed introduction.

These two lists have been added in the first volume of the English

.translation only; two other lists will be printed with every volume

We pray to Allah and beseech Him to make our deed purely for His pleasure, to help us complete the work we have started, and to guide us aright in every step we put .forward on this road. Surely, He is the best Guardian and the best Helper

World Organization For Islamic Services

(Board of Writing, Translation and Publication)

۱۷/۸/۱۹۸۱ ۲۷/۱۰/۱۴۰۲

Tehran - IRAN

Preface

All praise is for Allah Who sent down the Qur'an to His servant so that he may be a warner to the worlds; and blessings be on him whom He sent as a witness, and a bearer of good news and a warner, and as one inviting to Allah by His permission, and as a light-giving torch; and on his progeny from whom Allah kept away the .uncleanliness and whom He purified a thorough purifying

In this preface we shall describe the method adopted in this book to find out the .meanings of the verses of the Qur'an

exegesis), that is, explaining the meanings of the Qur'anic verse, = التفسير) at-Tafsir clarifying its import and finding out its significance, is one of the earliest academic activities in Islam. The interpretation of the Qur'an began with its revelation, as is :clear from the words of Allah

Even as We have sent among you an Apostle from among you who recites to you Our communications and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not

.(know (۲ :۱۵۱

The first exegetes were a few companions of the Prophet, like Ibn `Abbas, `Abdullah ibn `Umar, Ubayy (ibn Ka'b) and others. (We use the word, `companion', for other than 'Ali) because he and the Imams from his progeny have an unequalled distinction .- an unparalleled status, which we shall explain somewhere else

Exegesis in those days was confined to the explanation of literary aspects of the verse, the background of its revelation and, occasionally interpretation of one verse with the help of the other. If the verse was about a historical event or contained the realities of genesis or resurrection etc., then sometimes a few Tradition of the .Prophet were narrated to make its meaning clear

The same was the style of the disciples of the companions, like Mujahid, Qatadah, Ibn Abi Layla, ash-Sha'bi, as-Suddi and others, who lived in the first two centuries of hijrah. They relied even more on Tradition, including the ones forged and interpolated .by the Jews and others

They quoted those Tradition to explain the verses which contained the stories of the previous nations, or which described the realities of genesis, for example, creation of the heavens and the earth, beginning of the rivers and mountains, the "Iram" (the city of the tribe of `Ad), of Shaddad the so-called "mistakes" of the prophets, the alterations of the books and things like that. Some such matters could be found even .in the exegesis ascribed to the companions

During the reign of the caliphs, when the neighbouring countries were

conquered, the Muslims came in contact with the vanquished people and were involved in religious discussions with the scholars of various other religions and sects. This gave rise to the theological discourses- known in Islam as 'Ilmu'l-kalam (عِلمُ الكلام).

Also, the Greek philosophy was translated into Arabic. The process began towards the end of the first century of hijrah (Umayyad's period) and continued well into the third century (Abbasid's reign). This created a taste for intellectual and philosophical arguments in the Muslim intelligentsia.

At the same time, at-tasawwuf (التصـوف = Sufism, mysticism) raised its head in the society; and people were attracted towards it as it held out a promise of revealing to them the realities of religion through severe self-discipline and ascetical rigours - instead of entangling them into verbal polemics and intellectual arguments.

And there emerged a group, who called themselves people of tradition, who thought that salvation depended on believing in the apparent meanings of the Qur'an and the tradition, without any academic research. The utmost they allowed was looking into literary value of the words.

Thus, before the second century had proceeded very far, the Muslim society had broadly split in four groups: The theologians, the philosophers, the Sufis and the people of tradition. There was an intellectual chaos in the ummah and the Muslims, generally speaking, had lost their bearing. The only thing to which all were committed was the word, "There is no god except Allah, and Muhammad (saw) is the Messenger of Allah"".

They differed with each other in

everything else. There was dispute on the meanings of the names and attributes of Allah, as well as about His actions; there was conflict about the reality of the heavens and the earth and what is in and on them; there were controversies about the decree of Allah and the divine measure; opinions differed whether man is a helpless tool in divine hands, or is a free agent; there were wranglings about various aspects of reward and punishment; arguments were kicked like ball, from one side to the other intervening period between death = البرزَخ) concerning the realities of death, al-barzakh .and the Day of Resurrection); resurrection, paradise and hell

In short, not a single subject, having any relevance to religion, was left without a discord of one type or the other. And this divergence, not unexpectedly, showed itself in exegesis of the Qur'an. Every group wanted to support his views and opinions from .the Qur'an; and the exegesis had to serve this purpose

The people of tradition explained the Qur'an with the Tradition ascribed to the companions and their disciples. They went ahead so long as there was a tradition to lead them on, and stopped when they could not find any such tradition (provided the meaning was not self-evident). They thought it to be the only safe method, as Allah :says

and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say:' “We believe in it, it is all from . . . .(our Lord.” (٣:٧

But they were mistaken. Allah has not said

in His Book that rational proof had no validity. How could He say so when the authenticity of the Book itself depended on rational proof. On the other hand, He has never said that the words of the companions or their disciples had any value as religious proof. How could He say so when there were such glaring discrepancies in ?their opinions

In short, Allah has not called us to the sophistry which accepting and following contradictory opinions and views would entail. He has called us, instead, to meditate .on the Qur'anic verses in order to remove any apparent discrepancy in them

Allah has revealed the Qur'an as guidance, and has made it a light and an explanation of everything. Why should a light, seek brightness from others' light? Why should guidance be led by others' guidance? Why should "an explanation of everything" be ?explained by others' words

The theologians' lot was worse all the more. They were divided into myriads of sects; and each group clung to the verse that seemed to support its belief and tried to .explain away what was apparently against it

The seed of sectarian differences was sown in academic theories or, more often than not, in blind following and national or tribal prejudice; but it is not the place to describe it even briefly. However, such exegesis should be called adaptation, rather than explanation. There are two ways of explaining a verse – One may say: "What does the Qur'an say?" Or one may say: "How can this

"?verse be explained, so as to fit on my belief

The difference between the two approaches is quite clear. The former forgets every pre-conceived idea and goes where the Qur'an leads him to. The latter has already decided what to believe and cuts the Qur'anic verses to fit on that body; such an .exegesis is no exegesis at all

The philosophers too suffered from the same syndrome. They tried to fit the verses on the principles of Greek philosophy (that was divided into four branches: Mathematics, natural science, divinity and practical subjects including civics). If a .verse was clearly against those principles it was explained away

In this way the verses describing metaphysical subjects, those explaining the genesis and creation of the heavens and the earth, those concerned with life after death and those about resurrection, paradise and hell were distorted to conform to the said .philosophy

That philosophy was admittedly only a set of conjectures - unencumbered with any test or proof; but the Muslim philosophers felt no remorse in treating its views on the system of skies, orbits, natural elements and other related subjects as the absolute .truth with which the exegesis of the Qur'an had to conform

The Sufis kept their eyes fixed on esoteric aspects of creation; they were too occupied with their inner world to look at the outer one. Their tunnel-like vision .prevented them from looking at the things in their true perspective

Their love of esoteric made them look for inner interpretations of the verses; without any regard to

their manifest and clear meanings. It encouraged the people to base their .explanations on poetic expressions and to use anything to prove anything

The condition became so bad that the verses were explained on the-basis of the numerical values of their words; letters were divided into bright and dark ones and ?the explanations were based on that division. Building castle in the air, wasn't it

Obviously, the Qur'an was not revealed to guide the Sufis only; nor had it addressed itself to only those who knew the numerical values of the letters (with all its .ramifications); nor were its realities based on astrological calculations

Of course, there are Tradition narrated from the Prophet and the Imams of Ahlu'l-bayt (as) saying for example: “Verily the Qur'an has an exterior and an interior, and its interior has an interior upto seven (or according to a version, seventy) interiors . . . ” But the Prophet and the Imams gave importance to its exterior as much as to its interior; they were as much concerned with its revelation as they were with its .interpretation

We shall explain in the beginning of the third chapter, “The Family of `Imran”, that “interpretation” is not a meaning against the manifest meaning of the verse. Such an .”interpretation should more correctly be called “misinterpretation

This meaning of the word, “interpretation”, came in vogue in the Muslim circles long after the revelation of the Qur'an and the spread of Islam. What the Qur'an means by the word, “interpretation”, is something other than the

.meaning and the significance

In recent times, a new method of exegesis has become fashionable. Some people, supposedly Muslims, who were deeply influenced by the natural sciences (which are based on observations and tests) and the social ones (that rely on induction), followed .the materialists of Europe or the pragmatists

Under the influence of those anti-Islamic theories, they declared that the religion's realities cannot go against scientific knowledge; one should not believe except that which is perceived by any one of the five senses; nothing exists except the matter and .its properties

What the religion claims to exist, but which the sciences reject - like The Throne, The Chair, The Tablet and The Pen - should be interpreted in a way that conforms with the science; as for those things which the science is silent about, like the resurrection etc., they should be brought within the purview of the laws of matter; the pillars upon which the divine religious laws are based - like revelation, angel, Satan, prophethood, apostleship, imamah (Imamate) etc. - are spiritual things, and the spirit is a development of the matter, or let us say, a property of the matter; legislation of those laws is manifestation of a special social genius, who ordains them after healthy and .fruitful contemplations, in order to establish a good and progressive society

They have further said: One cannot have confidence in the Tradition, because many are spurious; only those Tradition may be relied upon which are in conformity with the Book. As for the

Book itself, one should not explain it in the light of the old philosophy and theories, because they were not based on observations and tests - they were just a sort of .mental exercise which has been totally discredited now by the modern science

The best, rather the only, way is to explain the Qur'an with the help of other Qur'anic .verses - except where the science has asserted something which is relevant to it

This, in short, is what they have written, or what necessarily follows from their total reliance on tests and observations. We are not concerned here with the question whether their scientific principles and philosophic dicta can be accepted as the .foundation of the Qur'an's exegesis

But it should be pointed out here that the objection which they have levelled against the ancient exegetes - that theirs was only an adaptation and not the explanation -is equally true about their own method; they too say that the Qur'an and its realities must be made to conform with the scientific theories. If not so, then why do they insist that the academic theories should be treated as true foundations of exegesis from ?which- no deviation could be allowed

.This method improves nothing on the discredited method of the ancients

If you look at all the above-mentioned ways of exegesis, you will find that all of them suffer from a most serious defect: They impose the results of academic or philosophic arguments on the Qur'anic meanings; they make the Qur'an conform to an

extraneous idea. In this way, explanation turns into adaptation, realities of the Qur'an are explained away as allegories and its manifest meanings are sacrificed for so-.”called “interpretations

:As we mentioned in the beginning, the Qur'an introduces itself as

• the guidance for the worlds (۳:۹۶);

• the manifest light (۴:۱۷۴),

• the explanation of every thing (۱۶:۸۹).

But these people, contrary to those Qur'anic declarations, make it to be guided by extraneous factors, to be illuminated by some outside theories, and to be explained !by something other than itself

What is that “something else”? What authority has it got? And if there is any difference in various explanations of a verse -and indeed there are most serious ?differences - which mediator should the Qur'an refer to

What is the root-cause of the differences in the Qur'an's explanations? It could not happen because of any difference in the meaning of a word, phrase or sentence. The Qur'an has been sent down in plain Arabic; and no Arab (or Arabic-knowing non-Arab) .can experience any difficulty in understanding it

Also, there is not a single verse (out of more than six thousand) which is enigmatic, obscure or abstruse in its import; nor is there a single sentence that keeps the mind wandering in search of its meaning. After all, the Qur'an is admittedly the most eloquent speech, and it is one of the essential ingredients of eloquence that the talk .should be free from obscurity and abstruseness

Even those verses that are counted among the “ambiguous” ones have no ambiguity in their

meanings; whatever the ambiguity, it is in identification of the particular thing or individual from among the group to which that meaning refers. This statement needs :some elaborations

In this life we are surrounded by matter; even our senses and faculties are closely related to it. This familiarity with matter and material things has influenced our mode of thinking. When we hear a word or a sentence, our mind races to its material .meaning

When we hear, for example, the words, life, knowledge, power, hearing, sight, speech, will, pleasure, anger, creation and order, we at once think of the material manifestations of their meanings. Likewise, when we hear the words, heaven, earth, tablet, pen, throne, chair, angel and his wings, and Satan and his tribe and army, the .first things that come into our minds are their material manifestations

Likewise, when we hear the sentences, “Allah created the universe”, “Allah did this”, “Allah knew it”, “Allah intended it” or “intends it”, we look at these actions in frame of .“time”, because we are used to connect every verb with a tense

:In the same way, when we hear the verses

- . . . and with Us is more yet (۵۰:۳۵),
- . . . We would have made it from before Ourselves (۲۱:۱۷),
- . . . and that which is with Allah is best . . . (۶۲:۱۱),
- . . . and to Him you shall be brought back (۲:۲۸, etc.),

we attach with the divine presence the concept of “place”, because in our minds the

.two ideas are inseparable

:Also, on reading the verses

- ,(And when We intend to destroy a town (۱۷:۱۶
- ,(And We intend to bestow a favour... (۲۸:۵
- ,(and Allah intends ease for you (۲:۱۸۵

we think that the "intention" has the same meaning in every sentence, as is the case .with our own intention and will

In this way, we jump to the familiar (which most often is material) meaning of every word. And it is but natural. Man has made words to fulfil his social need of mutual intercourse; and society in its turn was established to fulfil the man's material needs. Not unexpectedly, the words became symbols of the things which men were .connected with and which helped them in their material progress

But we should not forget that the material things are constantly changing and developing with the development of expertise. Man gave the name, lamp, to a certain receptacle in which he put a wick and a little fat that fed the lighted wick which illumi-nated the place in darkness. That apparatus kept changing until now it has become the electric bulb of various types; and except the name "lamp" not a single component .of the original lamp can be found in it

Likewise, there is no resemblance in the balance of old times and the modern scales - especially if we compare the old apparatus with the modern equipment for weighing .and measuring heat, electirc-current's flow and blood-pressure

And the armaments of old days and the ones invented within our own times

.have nothing in common, except the name

The named things have changed so much that not a single component of the original can be found in them; yet the name has not changed. It shows that the basic element that allows the use of a name for a thing is not the shape of that thing, but its purpose .and benefit

Man, imprisoned as he is within his habitat and habit, often fails to see this reality. That is why al-Hashawiyyah and those who believe that God has a body interpret the Qur'anic verses and phrases within the fame-work of the matter and the nature. But in fact they are stuck with their habit and usage, and not to the exterior of the Qur'an .and the Tradition

Even in the literal meanings of the Qur'an we find ample evidence that relying on the habit and usage in explanation of the divine speech would cause confusion and :anomaly. For example, Allah says

- ;(Nothing is like a likeness of Him (۴۲:۱۱
- Visions comprehended Him not, and He comprehends (all) visions; and He is the ;(Knower of subtilities, the Aware (۶:۷۳
- .(Glory be to Him above what they ascribe (to Him) (۲۳:۹۱; ۳۷:۱۵۹

These verses manifestly show that what we are accustomed to cannot be ascribed to .Allah

It was this reality that convinced many people that they should not explain the Qur'anic words by identifying them with their usual and common meanings. Going a step further, they sought the help of logical and philosophical arguments to avoid

wrong deductions. This gave a foot-hold to academic reasoning in explaining the Qur'an and identifying the individual person or thing meant by a word. Such :discussions can be of two kinds

i) The exegete takes a problem emanating from a Qur'anic statement, looks at it from academic and philosophical point of view, weighs the pros and cons and with the help of the philosophy, science and logic decides what the true answer should be. Thereafter, he takes the verse and fits it anyhow on that answer which, he thinks, is .right

The Muslim philosophers and theologians usually followed this method; but, as .mentioned earlier, the Qur'an does not approve of it

ii) The exegete explains the verse with the help of other relevant verses, meditating on them together - and meditation has been forcefully urged upon by the Qur'an itself - and identifies the individual person or thing by its particulars and attributes .mentioned in the verse

:No doubt this is the only correct method of exegesis. Allah has said

.(And We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything (۱۶:۸۹

Is it possible for such a book not to explain its own self? Also He has described the :Qur'an in these words

A guidance for mankind and clear evidence of guidance and discrimination (between ;(wrong) (۲:۱۸۵

:and He has also said

.(And We have sent down to you a manifest light (۴:۱۷۴

The Qur'an is, accordingly, a guidance, an evidence, a discrimination between right and wrong and a manifest light for the people to guide them aright and

help them in all their needs. Is it imaginable that it would not guide them aright in its :own matter, while it is their most important need? Again Allah says

And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our .(ways (۲۹:۶۹

Which striving is greater than the endeavour to understand His Book? And which way ?is more straight than the Qur'an

Verses of this meaning are very numerous, and we shall discuss them in detail in the beginning of the third chapter, The Family of `Imran. Allah taught the Qur'an to His :Prophet and appointed him as the teacher of the Book

The Faithful Spirit has descended with it upon your heart that you may be of the ;(warners, in plain Arabic language (۲۶:۱۹۳-۴

and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has ; (been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect (۱۶:۴۴

an Apostle . . . who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and . . . .(teaches them the Book and the Wisdom (۶۲:۲

And the Prophet appointed his progeny to carry on this work after him. It is clear from :his unanimously accepted tradition

I am leaving behind among you two precious things; as long as you hold fast to them you will never go astray after me: The Book of Allah and my progeny, my family members; and these two shall never separate from each other until they reach me .(on) the reservoir

And

Allah has confirmed, in the following two verses, this declaration of the Prophet that :his progeny had the real knowledge of the Book

Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanliness from you, O people of the House! ; (and to purify you a (thorough) purifying (۳۳:۳۳

Most surely it is an honoured Qur'an, in a Book that is hidden; None do touch it save . (the purified ones (۵۶:۷۷ -۷۹

And the Prophet and the Imams from his progeny always used this second method for explaining the Qur'an, as may be seen in the Tradition that have been narrated from them on exegesis, some of which will be quoted in this book in appropriate places. One cannot find a single instance in their Tradition where they might have taken help .of an academic theory or philosophical postulate for explaining a verse

:The Prophet has said in a sermon

Therefore, when mischief come to confuse you like the segments of darkened night,“ then hold fast to the Qur'an; as it is the intercessor whose intercession shall be granted; and a credible advocate; and whoever keeps it before him, it will lead him to the Garden; and whoever keeps it behind, it will drive him to the Fire; and it is the guide that guides to the best path; and it is a book in which there is explanation, particularization and recapitulation; and it is a decisive (word), and not a joke; and there is for it a manifest (meaning) and an esoteric (one); thus

its apparent (meaning) is firm, and its esoteric (one) is knowledge; its exterior is elegant and its interior deep; it has (many) boundaries, and its boundaries have (many) boundaries; its wonders shall not cease, and its (unexpected marvels shall not be old.

There are in it the lamps of guidance and the beacon of wisdom, and guide to knowledge for him who knows the attributes. Therefore, one should extend his sight; and should let his eyes reach the attribute; so that one who is in perdition may get deliverance, and one who is entangled may get free; because meditation is the life of the heart of the one who sees, as the one having a light (easily) walks in darkness; therefore, you must seek good deliverance and (that) with little waiting.

Ali (a.s.) said, inter alia, speaking about the Qur'an in a sermon: "Its one part speaks` with the other, and one portion testifies about the other."

This is the straight path and the right way which was used by the true teachers of the Qur'an and its guides, may Allah's blessings be on them all!

We shall write, under various headings, what Allah has helped us to understand from the honoured verses, by the above mentioned method. We have not based the explanations on any philosophical theory, academic idea or mystical revelation.

We have not put into it any outside matter except a fine literary point on which depends the understanding of Arabic eloquence, or a self-evident or practical premises which can be understood

.by one and all

From the discussions, written according to the above- mentioned method, the :following subjects have become crystal-clear

The matters concerning the names of Allah, and His attributes, like His Life, .١ Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight and Oneness etc. As for the Person of Allah, you will .find that the Qur'an believes that He needs no description

The matters concerning the divine actions, like creation, order, will, wish, guidance, .٢ leading astray, decree, measure, compulsion, delegation (of Power), pleasure, .displeasure and other similar actions

The matters concerned with the intermediary links between Allah and man, like the .٣ Curtain, the Tablet, the Pen, the Throne, the Chair, the Inhabited House, the Heavens, .the Earth, the Angels, the Satans, and the Jinns etc

.The details about man before he came to this world .۴

The matters related to man in this life, like the history of mankind, knowledge of his .۵ self, the foundation of society, the prophethood and the apostleship, the revelation, the inspiration, the book and the religion and law. The high status of the prophets, .shining through their stories, comes under this heading

.The knowledge about man after he departs from this world, that is, al-Barzakh .۶

The matters about human character. Under this heading come the various stages .٧ through which the friends of Allah pass in their spiritual journey, like submission, faith, .benevolence, humility, purity of intention and other virtues

We have not gone into details of the verses of the law, as more appropriately it is a) subject for the books of

(.jurisprudence

As a direct result of this method, we have never felt any need to interpret a verse against its apparent meaning. As we have said earlier, this type of interpretation is in fact misinterpretation. As for that “interpretation” which the Qur'an has mentioned in .various verses, it is not a type of “meaning”; it is something else

At the end of the commentaries, we have written some Tradition of the Prophet and the Imams of Ahlu'l-bayt (as), narrated by the Sunni and Shi`ah narrators. But we have not included the opinions of the companions and their disciples, because, first, there is too much confusion and contradiction in them; and second, they are not .vested with any authority in Islam

On going through those Tradition of the Prophet and the Imams (peace be on them all!), you will notice that this “new” method of exegesis (adopted in this book) is in reality the oldest and the original method which was used by the Teachers of the Qur' .(!an (peace of Allah be on them all

Also, we have written separately various topics - philosophical, academic, historical, social and ethical - when there was a need for it. In all such discussions, we have .confined our talk to the basic premises, without going in too much detail

We pray to Allah, High is He, to guide us and keep our talk to the point; He is the Best .Helper and the Best Guide

,Dependent on Allah

Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i

Suratul Fatiha, The Chapter Of The Opening ۱:۱-۵

point

(۱) بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(۲)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

(۳) الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(۴) مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

(۵) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

(۱) In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

(۲) All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

(۳) The Beneficent the Merciful.

(۴) The Master of the Day of Judgement.

(۵) Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help.

Commentary

Verse ۱

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

People often take the name of one of their great and powerful personalities at the time of doing or beginning a work. By this association, it is believed, the work would achieve success, greatness and blessings; or that it would be a memorial to keep the named one's memory alive for ever.

This is also observed in naming a child, a project, a house or an association – they give it the name of a deeply loved or highly respected person, so that his name would continue in this form; for example, a man names his son after his father, in order to perpetuate the father's memory.

This verse runs on the same line. Allah began His speech with His Own name – Great is His name – so that the ideas taught in this chapter be stamped by, and associated with it. Also, it teaches a lesson to mankind, showing them the perfect manner of

starting all their talks and actions; it guides them to put the stamp of the divine name on all their activities; doing every work for the sake of Allah, associating it with His

p: ٢٧

.good names and attributes

In this way that action would neither be rendered null and void, nor remain incomplete; it has been started in the name of Allah, and negation and annihilation .cannot reach that sacred name

Allah has declared variously in the Qur'an that what is not for His Person must perish, is in vain; He will proceed to the deeds not done for His sake and shall render them as scattered floating dust; He shall forfeit what they have done and shall nullify their .deeds; and that nothing shall remain except His honoured Person

Therefore, what is done for the sake of Allah and performed in His name, shall continue and will not perish. Everything, every work and every affair shall have its share of eternity – as much as it is related to Allah. It is this reality that has been hinted at in the universally accepted tradition of the Prophet: "Every important affair, not begun with the name of Allah, shall remain incomplete. . ." The word al-abtar (الأبتر = translated here as "incomplete") means a thing whose end is cut off, an animal whose .tail is severed

The preposition "bi" (بِـــ = in, with), in the phrase "In the name of Allah", is related to an implied verb, "I begin". This verse, at this particular place, begins the speech which is a single action; this singleness comes from the singleness of its meaning; that is, .the meaning intended to be conveyed, the aim and purpose of the speech

Allah has

:mentioned the purpose for which His speech -the whole Qur'an - has been revealed

indeed, there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allah; with it Allah . . . .(guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety. . . (۵:۱۵ -۱۶

There are other verses which show that the aim with which the Book - the speech of .Allah - has been sent down is the guidance of the people

Therefore, the full import of the sentence would be as follows: The guidance, total guidance is begun with the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful; He is Allah, Whom the servants return to; He is Beneficent, Who has opened the way of His All-encompassing mercy for believers and disbelievers alike, the mercy which provides them with all that is necessary and good for their existence and life; He is Merciful, Who has reserved His special mercy for the believers, the mercy which ensures their :happiness in the life hereafter and their nearness to their Lord. Allah has said

and My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it (specially) for those who . . . .(guard (against evil) and pay zakat, and those who believe in our signs (۷:۱۵۶

This explanation has been written, putting this verse in the framework of the whole .Qur'an, of which it is the first sentence

:Again, Allah has repeatedly mentioned "chapter" in His speech. For example

;(Say: "Then bring a chapter like this. . . "(۱۰:۳۸

Say: "Then bring ten chapters like

;(it, forged. . . "(۱۱:۱۳

;(And whenever a chapter is revealed. . . (۹:۸۶

.(This is) a chapter which We have revealed. . . (۲۴:۱)

It shows that Allah Himself has divided His speech in various parts, each part being .called a chapter

It naturally means that every chapter is a single unit in structure and in fullness of meaning; and that that unity is not found between various verses of a chapter or between one chapter and the other. It necessarily follows that the theme of every chapter is different from the other; every chapter is revealed with a certain aim in .view, and when that aim is achieved the chapter comes to its end

Therefore, the verse, "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful" coming at .the beginning of every chapter, refers to the particular theme of that chapter

Accordingly, this verse, at the beginning of this chapter of "The Opening", refers also to the theme of this chapter. It appears from its semantic flow that its purpose is to praise Allah and to pledge the believer's servitude (declaring that he worships only Allah and seeks help from Him only) and then to pray for divine guidance. This speech has been uttered by Allah, on behalf of His servant, so that the servant may learn how, by repeating these words, he may show his gratitude to, and servitude before, .Allah

This pledging of servitude is the important work which the servant of Allah intends to do; and which he begins in the name

of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. In this context, this verse would mean: In Thy .name, I pledge my servitude to Thee

In this first verse of this chapter, therefore, the preposition, “in”, is related to the implied verb, “I begin”; and the aim is to perfect the sincere servitude by addressing the pledge to Allah Himself. Some people have said that the implied verb is “I seek help” (by); although this view is not objectionable, but “I begin” is more appropriate - the chapter explicitly seeks divine help, “and Thee do we beseech for help”; therefore, .it is not necessary in the beginning

name) is the word that points to the named thing or person. It is = الإسم) "al-Ism" height, = السّمو) sign, identifying mark) or as-sumuww = السّمه) derived from as-simah eminence). In any case, it is the word by which an individual thing or person is spoken .of or spoken to. Naturally, it is other than, and separate from, the named thing

:The following is a sample of the academic exercises so much loved by the ancients

There is a name that means “the person himself seen in the light of an attribute”; such a name is not separate from the named person; it is the person himself. The word al-The Knower), one of the divine names, points to the Person of Allah as = العالم) Alim seen in the light of His attribute of Knowledge. At the same time, it refers to Allah Who cannot be known except by

.one or the other of His attributes

Let us explain this matter in another way: “Name” points to the named person; likewise the personal traits and characteristics point to the holder of those traits and characteristics – in this way, we may say that the personal traits are the “names” of the person concerned. “Name”, accordingly, can be of two kinds: in words, and in .substance

The direct name is of the second type, ,that is, the personal trait that points to its own subjects – for example, the “Knowledge” that points to Allah, the holder of the knowledge. And the word “the Knower” is in reality an indirect name – it points to the direct name, that is, the attribute of knowledge, which in its turn directly points to its holder, that is, Allah. “Knowledge” is, thus, the name of Allah, and “the Knower” is “the .”name of the name

The above was the result of the academic analysis (or should we say, mental luxury!) mentioned earlier; but such things should not be imposed on language and literature. “Name”, according to the “plain Arabic language”, means what we have written earlier. There was a lot of controversy going on among the theologians of the early .centuries of Islam: whether the name was separate from the named person or not

Such unnecessary polemics is out of place at present times; it is self-evident that “name” and “named” are two things, and not one. We should not waste time and 'energy in quoting the ancients

.arguments and counter-arguments, and in judging who was right

the divine name) was originally al-Ilah; the "I" in the middle was omitted = الله) "Allah" he worshipped) or = أَلَهَ) is derived from alaha (الالـه) because of frequent use. Al-Ilah .(he was bewildered = وَلِهَ or أَلِهَ) from aliha or waliha

object-noun); for = المفعول) on meaning of al-maf'ū١ (الفِعال) It is on paradigm of al-fi'al the written); likewise a١-I١ah = المكتـوب) means al -maktūb (الكِتاب) example, al-kitab that is the One who is worshipped, or the One about whom (المـألوه) means al-Ma'lūh .minds are bewildered

Quite clearly, it has become the proper name of God. It was commonly used in this meaning in Arabic long before the Qur'an was revealed. The fact that even pre-:Islamic Arabs used this name for God, may be inferred from the following verses

And if you should ask them who created them, they would certainly say: `Allah". . . .((۴۳:۸۷

and they say: "This for Allah"-so they assert - "and this is for our associates". . . . . . .((۶:۱۳۶

Other divine names may be used as adjectives for this name; for example, "the Beneficent and the Merciful Allah"; also, this name is used as subject of the verbs derived from other divine names; for example, "Allah knew", "Allah had mercy", "Allah gave sustenance" etc. But the word, "Allah", is never used as adjective to any other name, nor is the verb derived from it used to describe other names. It is a clear proof that it is the

.proper name of God

The divine existence, inasmuch as Allah is the God of everything, presupposes that He should have all the attributes of perfection; and, as a result, this name points to all perfect attributes. That is why it is said that the name, “Allah”, means “the Person Who is the Essential Being, and Who encompasses all the attributes of perfection”. But the fact is that it is the proper name of God and no other meaning (except that related to worship or bewilderment) has been taken into consideration here.

“ar-Rahman ar-Rahīm” (الرحمن الرحیم = The Beneficent, the Merciful) are two adjectives derived from ar-rahmah (الرحمه = mercy).

When you see someone suffering from a deficiency which he cannot remove by himself, the reaction which you experience and which tells you to provide him with what he needs in order to make up his deficiency, is called mercy. Ultimately, mercy means giving and bestowing to fulfill other's need. It is this latter meaning in which this attribute is used for Allah.

“ar-Rahman” (الرحمـــن) is on a paradigm which is used for magnification and exaggeration. “ar-Rahīm” (الرحیم) is a paradigm of as-Sifatu 'l-mushabbahah (الصّفه المُشَبِّهَه = perpetual adjective, inseparable attribute). Therefore, “ar-Rahman” (translated here as “the Beneficent”) relates to that all-encompassing mercy that is bestowed upon the believers and the unbelievers alike. It is used in the Qur'an, mostly in this meaning. Allah says:

The Beneficent (God) is firm in power (۲۰:۵);

Say: “As for him who remains in error, the Beneficent (God) will

.(surely prolong his length of days. . . (۱۹:۷۵

ar-Rahīm" (translated here as "the Merciful"), on the other hand, is more appropriate" for that mercy which shall remain for ever, the perpetual inexhaustible mercy that :shall be bestowed on the believers in the life hereafter. Allah says

;(and He is Merciful to the believers (۳۳:۴۳ . . .

.(Surely to them (i.e., the believers) He is Compassionate, Merciful (۹:۱۱۷

That is why it is said that the mercy of "ar-Rahman" is common for the believers and .the unbelievers, and that of "ar-Rahīm" is reserved for the believers

Verse ۲

All praise is due to Allah

is to praise someone for a good acquired by his (الحمد) "It has been said that "al- hamd also translated as praise) is more general - it is used = (المَدح)"own intention, "al-madh .to praise even that good which someone is given without his will and power

If you praise someone for his benevolence, you may use either word - al-hamd or al-madh but if you want to praise a pearl for its lustre, you may use the verbal-madh, but not al-hamd because the pearl has not acquired that lustre by its own will and power. translated here as "all") in "al-hamd" denotes either species or praise, or each = (الْ)" "al and every praise. The end-result is the same in either case; that is why it has been :translated here as "all". Allah says

.(That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of every thing (۴۰:۶۲

:Whatever there is, is created by Allah. Again He says

.

.(Who made good everything that He has created (۳۲: ۷ . .

.Everything is good because it has been created by Allah and is attributed to Him

In other words, a thing becomes good because it is created by Allah; and everything created by Him is good. Every creature is good and beautiful because Allah has made it so; and every good and beautiful thing is created by Allah, attributed to Him. Allah :says

;(He is Allah, the One, the Subduer (of all) (۳۹:۴

.(And the faces are humbled before the Living, the Self-subsistent God . . . (۲۰:۱۱۱

In other words, He has created the creatures by His own knowledge, power and will, and not because He was compelled by someone else to do so. Therefore, everything .is His own good work, done by His own will

:The above discourse was about Allah's action. Coming to His names, He has said

; (Allah is He besides Whom there is no god; His are the very best names (۲۰:۸

And Allah's are the best names; therefore call on Him thereby, and leave alone those .(who violate the sanctity of His names (۷:۱۸۰

It is clear that Allah is good in His names and good in His actions; and that every good .and beauty emanates from Him

Therefore, Allah is praised for His good names as He is praised for His good actions. Every praise, uttered by any speaker for any good deed is in reality addressed to Allah only; because every good (which is the object of praise) emanates

from Him only. In short, to Him belongs the species of the praise and all and every .praise

The verse: "Thee do we worship", shows that the whole chapter is revealed on behalf of man. Allah teaches him in this chapter how to praise his Lord and how to show his allegiance to, and humility towards, Him. And the phrase, "All praise is due to Allah", .further strengthens this inference, as will be seen in the next paragraph

The praise means to attribute, to ascribe; and Allah has declared that He is above all :that His servants ascribe to Him. He has said

Hallowed be Allah (for freedom) from what they ascribe, except the servants of Allah, .(freed (from sins) (۳۷:۱۵۹ -۱۶۰

This declaration is general and unconditional; and it is further proved by the fact that not a single verse in the Qur'an ascribes the action of "praise" to anyone except Allah .(and some of the prophets (who were doubtlessly freed from sins

:Allah addresses Nuh (Noah -a.s.) in these words

.(Say: "All praise is due to Allah who delivered us from the unjust people" (۲۳:۲۸ . . .

:And He quotes Ibrahim (Abraham -a.s.) as saying

.(Praise be to Allah, Who gave me in old age Isma'il and Ishaq . . ." (۱۴:۳۹"

,Also, He told His Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), in several places

.(And say: "Praise be to Allah. . . " (۲۷:۹۳

:(Further, he says about Dawūd and Sulayman (peace be on both of them

" . . .and they both said: "Praise be to Allah . . .

.(۲۷:۱۵)

Another exception is of the people of the Paradise –and they also are freed from spite :and rancour as well as from vain and sinful words

.(and the last of their cry shall be: "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds" (۱۰:۱۰ . . .

As for other creatures, the Qur'an never says that they "praise" Allah – they always :"glorify Allah with His praise". Allah says

;(and the angels declare His glory with the praise of their Lord . . . (۴۲:۵ . . .

;(and the thunder declares His glory with His praise . . . (۱۳:۱۳

.(and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise . . . (۱۷:۴۴

In all these verses "praise" is preceded by glorifying; rather "glorifying" is the main verb and "with praise" is only a clause, attached to it. None except Allah may comprehend the beauty and perfection of His work, nor can anyone else understand :the beauty and perfection of His names and attributes. Allah says

.(they do not comprehend Him in knowledge . . . (۲۰ :۱۱۰ . .

In this background, if they were to praise Him it would mean that they had compre… hended Him in their knowledge; in other words, Allah would be surrounded by their limited understanding, confined within the boundary of their comprehension. Therefore, they were careful enough to first declare His glory from all the limits of :their comprehension, before starting His praise. Allah says

.(surely Allah knows and you do not know (۱۶:۷۴. . .

So far

as His purified servants are concerned, He treats their utterance of praise as though .He Himself has said it, because they are free from sins and defects

From the above discourse, it becomes crystal-clear what the good manner of servitude demands: The servant should praise his Lord in exactly the same words the Lord Himself has chosen for Himself; no deviation from it would be tolerable, as the Prophet has said in an universally accepted tradition; "I do not enumerate Thy praise; ". . . Thou art as Thou Thyself hast praised Thyself

Therefore, the divine word, "All praise is due to Allah", is a sort of a training to the servant - a training without which he could not know how to declare the praise of .Allah

Verses ۲,۳ and ۴

the Lord of the worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Master of the Day of Judgement

is the Master Who manages the affairs of His servant. The word, thus, (الرّب) "ar-Rabb" connotes the idea of ownership. Ownership (in our social structure) is a special relationship of one thing with another - a relationship that allows the owner to do with .the owned thing as he wishes

When we say, "This thing belongs to us", it shows that it has a special relationship with us that allows us to do with it as we wish; had it not been for this relationship, we .would not have had this authority over it

In this social context, it is an idea which the society has laid down but which has no

existence outside imagination. This idea is derived from another real and positive :”concept, which too is called “ownership

Our limbs and faculties, like the sight, the hearing, the hands and the feet, belong to us - they exist because of our own existence, they have no independent existence, they depend on us for their existence and continuity, and we use them as we like. This .is the real ownership

The ownership that may be attributed to Allah is the real one, and not that which is based on subjective outlook. Obviously the real ownership cannot be disjoined from .management of the affairs of the owned thing

The owned thing depends on the owner in its existence, as well as in all affairs related to its existence. Allah is “ar-Rabb “the Lord of everything because the Lord is the owner who manages the affairs of, and looks after, the owned thing - and only Allah .has this attribute

the world) which literally means, “what = (العالَم is the plural of al'alam (العالمين) al-'Alamīn“ the = (القالب one is known with”. This paradigm is used for “instrument”, like al-qalab 'the seal, the instrument of sealing), and at-taba = (الخاتم mold, the form), al-khatam .(the stamp, the impress = (الطابع

The word al-'Alam is used for the universe - the whole creation taken together. Also it is used for each genes or species taken separately, for example, the inorganic world, .the vegetable world, the animal world, the human world

,It is also used for a class of a species

like the Arab world, the African world etc. This last meaning is more appropriate in the context of these verses: The verses that enumerate the good names of Allah until they come to "the Master of the Day of Judgement". The judgement is reserved for .mankind alone or together with the jinn

Therefore, the "worlds" should refer to the worlds of the human beings and the jinn, that is, their various groups. The word al'alamin (the worlds) has been used in this :sense in other Qur'anic verses too. Allah says

; (and has chosen you above the women of the worlds (۳:۴۲. . .

;(so that he may be a Warner to the worlds (۲۵:۱. . .

What! do you commit an indecency which any one in the worlds has not done before .(you (۷:۸۰

The Master of the Day of Judgement": We have explained above the meaning of" is derived from al-milk (المالک) "ownership, that is, mastership. The word "al-malik .(possession, to possess = المِـلک)

the sovereign, the king); it is = المالک) "Some reciters have read this word as "al-malik country; kingdom). The king is the one who has the = المُـلک) derived from al-mulk authority to manage his nation's affairs; nevertheless he does not own the nation or the country. In other words, he holds the authority for management and .administration

The reciters have given the reasons for their preference of either recitation. But the fact remains that Allah is the Master as well as the King, and both words are equally correct, so

far as the divine authority is concerned. Looking at it from linguistic point of view, the .word, “King” is generally used in context of time and period

It is said, “The King of that time”; but they do not say “the master of that time”, as it would be stretching the meaning too far. In this verse, Allah has used this word in reference to a certain “day”; therefore, linguistically, it would be more proper to say, “The King of the Day of Judgement”. Moreover, Allah has used the word, “Kingdom” in :context of the same day in other verse

To whom belongs the kingdom of this day? To Allah, the One, the Subduer (of all) .((۴۰:۱۶

Traditions

Ar-Rida (a.s.) said in explanation of the divine words: In the name of Allah: “It means: 'I mark my soul with one of the marks of Allah', and it is (His) worship.” He was asked: .(“What is the 'mark'?” He said; “The brand.”(`Uyūnu '۱-akhbar and Ma'ani 'l-akhbar

The author says: This meaning emanates from the explanation given earlier that the preposition, “in”, herein connotes beginning. As the servant marks his worship with the name of Allah, he brands his soul - real doer of the worship - with one of the divine .marks

It is narrated in at-Tahdhīb from as-Sadiq (a.s.), and in `Uyūnu 'l-akhbar andat-Tafsīr of al-`Ayyashi from ar-Rida (a.s.) that this verse “is nearer to the Greatest name of .”Allah than the iris of the eye is from its white

The author says: This tradition will be

.explained when we shall talk about the Greatest name

Amiru 'l-mu'minīn (a.s.) said that (this verse) is from the chapter of The Opening; and verily the Apostle of Allah used to recite it and count it as one of its verses, and he used to say, "The Opening of the Book is `the seven oft-repeated' (verses)". (`Uyūnu ('l-akhbar

The author says: This matter has also been narrated by the Sunni narrators. ad-Dar-qutnī narrates from Abū Hurayrah that he said: "The Apostle of Allah said: When you recite (the chapter of) The Praise (i.e., The Opening), you shall recite, In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, because it is the source of the Book and (is) the seven oft-repeated (verses), and, In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful is .one of its verses

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "What have they done? May Allah destroy them! They proceeded to the greatest verse of the Book of Allah, and thought that it would be an innovation ((unlawful act) if they recited it loudly!" (al-Khisal

al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "They stole the most exalted verse of the Book of Allah, (that is) In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. It should be recited at the start of .every big or small work, so that it may be blessed

The author says: There are numerous Tradition of this meaning coming from the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.). All of them prove that the verse (In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful) is a

part of every chapter, except the ninth (" Repentance"); and the Sunni Tradition also prove it

Anas (ibn Malik) said that the Apostle of Allah said: "Just now a chapter has been sent down to me." Then he began reciting, "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful." (as-Sahih, Muslim).

Abu Dawud narrates from Ibn `Abbas (and they say that its chain is "correct") that he said: "Verily, the Apostle of Allah did not know the separation of a chapter (and in another narrative it is `end of a chapter') until came down to him: In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful"

The author says: This matter has been narrated by Shi `ite narrators also from al-Baqir (a.s).(

It is reported in al-Kafi, at-Tawhīd, Ma'ani '۱-akhbar and at-Tafsīr of al-`Ayyashi that as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, inter alia, in a tradition: "And Allah is God of everything, ar-Rahman (the Beneficent) for all His creations, ar-Rahīm (the Merciful) especially for the believers."

as-Sadiq (a.s.) has said: "ar-Rahman (the Beneficent) is a special name with a general attribute; and ar-Rahīm (the Merciful) is a general name with a special attribute."

The author says: The preceding Commentary may explain why the mercy of "the Beneficent" is general for the believer and the unbeliever alike, and why that of "the Merciful" is reserved for the believer only.

The description given in this tradition that "the Beneficent is a special name with a general attribute, and the Merciful is a general name with a special attribute ", perhaps this refers to

the fact that the mercy of the Beneficent is limited to this world and is common for the whole creation; and that of the Merciful is common to this world and the hereafter but .is reserved for the believer

In other words, the mercy of the Beneficent is reserved for the creative blessings that are bestowed on believers and unbelievers alike; and that of the Merciful is common to the creative and legislative blessings (the latter opening the way to happiness and felicity) and is reserved for believers, because only the bounties bestowed upon them .will last for ever, and the (good) end is for guarding (against evil) and for piety

It is narrated in Kashfu '۱-ghummah that as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "A mule of my father was lost. He said: `If Allah brought it back to me, I would thank Him with praises He would be pleased with." Shortly afterwards, it was brought before him with its saddle and .(rein (intact

When he sat on it and arrayed his clothes, he raised his head towards heaven and said: 'Praise be to Allah.' He said nothing more. Then he said: "I did not omit, nor did I leave out, anything; I have declared that all praises are for Allah, Powerful and Great ".(is He!; because there is no praise but it is included in this (formula

It is narrated in `Uyūnu 'l-akhbar that 'Ali (a. s.) was asked about its explanation. He said: "Verily, Allah has explained to His servants broadly some of His bounties

on them, as they cannot know all His bounties in detail - they are beyond enumeration and description. Therefore, He said: Say: 'All praise is for Allah on what He has bestowed upon us.' "

The author says: The Imam points to the fact mentioned earlier that the praise, in this verse, is from the servant, and that Allah has revealed it to teach him the manners of servitude and worship.

From Philosophical Point Of View

Reason tells us that an effect, as well as all its characteristics and affairs, depend on its cause; whatever perfection it may be having, is a shadow of the cause. If beauty or goodness has any existence, then its perfect and independent entity is for Allah only, as He is the Cause of all causes.

The praise and thank is addressed, in reality, to the cause which creates the perfection and excellence referred to. As every perfection is caused by Allah, every praise and thank, in reality, is addressed to Allah. Therefore, all praise is for, and due to Allah.

Verse ۵

Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help

"al- Abd" (العَبد) means slave, a human being who is owned. In its abstract sense, it is applied to other intellectual beings also, as the words of Allah show:

There is no one in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Beneficent God as `abdan ("عبْداَ = ۱۹:۹۳) (a slave).

"al -'Ibadah " (العِباده = to serve, to worship, to obey) is derived In modern usage, it is commonly translated as 'servant.'

from this word. Its inflexion and meaning changes according to the context. al-Jawhari has written in his dictionary, as-Şihah, that "the basis ofal-'ubūdiyyah (العبوديه = 'bondage, servitude) is "al-khudu (الخضوع) submission."

But this explanation is not of the word; it only shows a concomitant quality of its meaning; because al-khudu` is used with the preposition "li (لِـ), and al-`ibadah is used without any preposition.(1)

When a servant of Allah worships Him, he stands before the Lord as a slave stands before his master. That is why worship is diametrically opposed to arrogance and pride - but it is not so opposed to polytheism; after all, a slave may be jointly owned by two or more masters. Allah says:

Verily those who are arrogant to My worship shall soon enter Hell, disgraced (40:60).

. . . and he should not join anyone in the worship of his Lord (18:110).

It should be noted here that polytheism - joining someone in the worship of Allah - is a possibility, and that is why it has been made subject of this prohibition; none forbids an impossible thing. But arrogance does not exist with worship, and that is why the expression, "arrogant to my worship", has been used in the first verse.

Servitude is effective in those affairs which are owned or controlled by the master; and not in other matters related to the slave, like his being son of his father, or having a height of so many centimetres - there is no submission or servitude in such

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1- This argument seems inconclusive. If two words are synonymous, it is not necessary for them to have the same preposition, al-Mawla (المولى) and al-awla (الأولى) have the same meaning - guardian, master, but the former is used without a preposition while the latter is followed by the preposition "bi" (بِـــ = for, with, etc.).

things. But the mastership of Allah is not limited; His mastership is not shared by anyone else, nor is the servitude of the creatures divided between Allah and someone .else

A master has only limited authority over his servants - he may employ them to perform certain duties, but he cannot kill them or punish them unjustly. But Allah has total and all-encompassing authority over His servants; He does whatsoever He wills with them and about them. His ownership is unconditional and unlimited; and the .servitude of His creatures is likewise unconditional and unlimited

This "ownership" is true and exclusive on both sides: The Lord has the exclusive ownership, and the slave has the exclusive servitude. The construction of the sentence, "Thee do we worship", points to this exclusiveness - the object, "Thee", has .been placed before the verb, and worship is mentioned without any condition

It has been explained earlier that the owned thing exists and subsists because of, and with, its owner. In this sense, it should not divert an onlooker's attention from its owner. You look at a house belonging to Zayd; if you are looking at it merely as a house, you may possibly lose sight of Zayd; but if you look at it from the angle that it is .a property of Zayd, you cannot wean your thoughts from him

The only true attribute of the universe is that it is created and owned by Allah. Nothing in the creation can hide the divine presence, nor should looking at

:these things make one forgetful of Allah. He is ever present, as He has said

Is it not sufficient as regards your Lord that he is a witness over all things? Now surely they are in doubt as to the meeting of their Lord; now surely He encompasses all .(things (۴۱:۵۳-۵۴

The true worship, therefore, is that in which the worshipped and the worshipper both are present. Allah should be worshipped as the One who is present before the worshipper – and that is why the third person of the preceding verses has been ."changed to the second person in this verse, "Thee do we worship

The worshipper should be present before his Lord, not only with his body but also with his soul; otherwise, the worship would be a body without soul, a form without life. Nor should he divide his attention between his Lord and someone (or something) else – neither openly, (as the idol worshippers do) – nor secretly (like the one whose mind is on something else while worshipping Allah, or the one who worships Allah because he .(wants to enter the Garden or to save himself from the hell

All these diversions are various facets of polytheism, and Allah has forbidden it in His :Book

.(therefore, worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion (۳۹:۲ . . .

Now, surely, sincere religion is for Allah (alone), and (as for) those who take guardians besides Him, (saying): We do not worship them save that they may make us nearer to ,Allah

p: ۴۹

.(surely Allah will judge between them in that in which they differ (۳۹:۳

Worship shall be a true worship when it is done with pure intention, and this purity has been named as the presence of the worshipper. This will happen only when the attention of the Worshipper is not fixed on anyone other than Allah (otherwise, it would be polytheism); and when his aim of worship is not any other hope or fear like .(that of the paradise or the hell (otherwise, the worship would not be purely for Allah

Moreover, he should not be concerned with his own self, as it would tantamount to egotism and arrogance, completely opposite of submission and servitude. Probably the plural pronoun - "we" worship - points to this fact; it negates the individuality of the worshipper as he includes himself in a multitude of people; it removes egotism, .creates humility, and effaces the tendency of self-importance

The declaration of one's servitude with the words, "Thee do we worship", is free from all defects, so far as its meaning and purity are concerned. Yet, as the servant describes the worship as his own act, it could create an impression that he thought to be independent in existence, power and will, while in fact he is only a slave and slave .owns nothing

The second sentence, "and Thee do we beseech for help", removes this possible misunderstanding. It means: "We ascribe the worship to ourselves and make this claim only with Thy help; we are never independent of

.Thee

In other words, the complete verse, “Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help”, gives a single meaning, and that is “worship with purity of intention”. Probably, that is why both sentences have the same style; otherwise, it could be said, 'Thee do we worship; help us and guide us . . .'The style has been changed in the next .verse, “guide us . . .” and its reason will be explained later

The above-given explanation makes it clear why the pronouns in this verse have been changed from the third to the second person; why the restrictive device of putting the object (“Thee”) before the verb has been chosen; why the worship, in “do we worship”, is used without any condition; why worshipper includes others with him in this declaration of allegiance and worship; why the second sentence is needed after .the first; and why both have the same construction and style

The scholars have written other fine points about this verse; the reader is advised to refer to their books for this purpose; Allah is the creditor whose debt can never be .repaid

Suratul Fatiha: Verses ۶–۷

point

(۶) اهدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُستَقِيمَ

(۷) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّالِّينَ

,(Guide us to the straight path (۶

the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those inflicted by .(Thy wrath, nor of those gone astray (۷

Commentary

Qur’an

”Guide us to the straight path . . . nor of those gone astray: The meaning of “al-hidayah

(guidance, to guide = الهدایه)

p: ۵۱

”may easily be understood, if we consider first the significance of the “path”.“as-Sirat (الصراط = path) is synonymous with at-tarīq (الطريق) and as-sabīl (السّبيل).

In these verses, Allah has commended the path that it is straight and that it is the path taken by those upon whom Allah has bestowed His bounties and favours. It is this path guidance to which has been asked for. And it is the ultimate goal of the worship: The servant prays to his Lord that his worship, clean from all impurities, be performed .in this path

Allah has mentioned in His Book that He has laid down a path for man, nay, for all the :creation, a path upon which they are proceeding. He says

O man! Surely thou art striving to thy Lord, a hard striving, until thou art to meet Him ;((۸۴:۶

;(and to Him is the ultimate resort (۶۴:۳ . . .

.(now surely to Allah do all affairs eventually come (۴۲:۵۳ . . .

There are many such verses, showing that all are proceeding on a prescribed road and that their destination is Allah. So far as the way is concerned, Allah has said that :there are two ways, not one

Did I not enjoin on you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy. And that you should worship Me; this is the straight .(path (۳۰:۶۰-۶۱

:So, there is a straight path, and also there is another path. Again He has said

then verily I . . .

am near; I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me, so they should ;(answer My call and believe in Me, that they may walk in the right way (۲:۱۸۶

Call upon Me, I will answer you. Verily, those who are arrogant to My worship shall .(soon enter hell, disgraced (۴۰:۶۰

Obviously, Allah is near to His servants, and the nearer path to Him is that of worship :and prayer. Compare it with description of those who do not believe in Him

.(these shall be called to from a far-off place (۴۱:۴۴ . . .

Obviously, the station of unbelievers is far-off place. There are thus two ways to Allah, a near one - the way of the believers - and a distant one, that of the others. It is the .first difference between the ways

:Second difference

Surely (as for) those who reject Our signs and turn away from them haughtily, the .(doors of heaven shall not be opened for them (۷:۴۰

What is the function of a door? To let authorized people pass through it and bar the entry to unauthorized ones. The verse shows that there is a passage from the lower .level to the upper heights

:On the other hand, Allah says

.(and to whomsoever My wrath descends he shall perish indeed (۲۰:۸۱ . . .

The word translated here as "shall perish" literally means "shall fall down". Therefore, there is another passage coming for the upper heights to the lower level. Also He :says

and whoever adopts unbelief instead of . . .

.(faith, he indeed has gone astray from (i.e., has lost) the right way (٢: ١٠٨

Allah uses the term "polytheism" for "going astray".(١) Accordingly, people are divided :into three categories

First, those who proceed to the upper heights – those who believe in the signs of Allah .and are not arrogant to His worship

Second, those who fall down to the lower levels – they are those upon whom the .wrath of Allah has descended

Third, those who have gone astray from the right path; they are lost, wandering .hither and thither

The last verse under discussion points to these three categories: "the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those inflicted by Thy wrath, nor of ".those gone astray

Obviously, "the straight path" is separate from the last two paths. It is the path of the believers who are not arrogant. At the same time, the following verse shows that the :straight path itself may be divided in various "traffic lanes", ways or branches

Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in . . . .(high degrees . . . (٥٨:١١

:This statement needs some elaboration

Every straying is polytheism and vice versa, as may be inferred from the words of :Allah

and whoever adopts unbelief instead of faith, he indeed has gone astray from the . . . .(right way (٢:١٠٨

:The same is the theme of the verse

Did not I enjoin on you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan?

Surely he is

۱- As may be seen in the verses ۳۶:۶۰-۶۲, quoted above.

your open enemy. And that you should worship Me; this is the straight path. And .(certainly he has led astray a great multitude from among you (۳۶:۶۰ - ۶۲

Likewise, the Qur'an counts polytheism as injustice and vice versa, as may be seen in the words which the Satan shall utter after the judgment will be delivered against him :and his followers

surely I disbelieved in your associating me with Allah, before; surely it is the unjust . . . .(that shall have the painful punishment (۱۴:۲۲

:Then it counts injustice as straying

Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice, those are they who .(shall have the security and they are those who shall be guided aright (۶:۸۲

It should be noted that they shall be guided aright and shall have security against straying or its resulting punishment only if they do not mix their faith with injustice and .inequity

It is clear from looking at these verses together that going stray, polytheism and inequity all have the same effect; all three are adjunct to each other. That is why it is said that each of them is identifiable by the other two. For all practical purposes the .three are one and the same, although they may be different in their literal meaning

The straight path, then, is different from that of those who have gone astray; it is a path which is far away from polytheism and injustice. There can be no straying in this path - neither in hidden ideas

and beliefs (for example, the disbelief or the thoughts disapproved by Allah); nor in open actions or omissions (like committing a sin or omitting a good deed). It is the true .monotheism in belief and in deeds

And what is there after the truth but error? The above-mentioned verse ۶:۸۲ fits on it completely. That verse guarantees security in the way and promises perfect guidance. The promise is inferred from the fact that the original word translated as "guided aright" is noun-agent, and the grammarians say that such a noun is really .made for future. This is one feature of the straight path

:Allah has identified those bestowed with divine favours, in the verse

And whoever obeys Allah and the Apostle, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the .(righteous ones; and excellent are these as companions (۴:۶۹

:The belief and the obedience have been explained shortly before it in these words

But no! by your Lord! they do not believe (in reality) until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then they do not find any straitness in their selves as to what you have decided, and submit with total submission. And if We had prescribed for them: Kill yourselves or go forth from your homes, they would not have done it except a few of them; and if they had done what they were admonished, it would have certainly

. (been better for them and most efficacious in strengthening (them) (۴ :۶۵-۶۶

Those who truly believe are really strong in their servitude and submission, in words and in deeds; in appearance and in secret. Yet such perfect believers shall be placed in a rank behind those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours; that is why Allah has said, “these are with those . . .” and not, 'among those'. They shall be with them, but not of them. It is further strengthened by the last sentence, “and excellent are these .as companions”. Companions are other than the self

:There is another, somewhat similar, verse in fifty-seventh chapter

and (as for) those who believe in Allah and His apostles, these it is that are the truthful .(and the martyrs with their Lord; they shall have their reward and their light . . . (۵۷:۱۹

The believers, thus, shall be included in the ranks of the martyrs and the truthful - in the life hereafter. The fact that it will happen in the next world is inferred from the .”words, “with their Lord”, and “they shall have their reward

Those bestowed with divine favours who are the people of the straight path - with whose relationship the straight path is identified - have greater prestige and higher rank than these believers who have cleansed their beliefs and actions from straying, polytheism and injustice. Pondering on these verses together, one feels sure that this group of the believers (with this quality) still continues; it has not come to

.its end

Had this group completed its term, it would have been counted among (and not, “with”) those bestowed with favours; these believers would have gone up and instead of being with those bestowed with favours, would have become part of them. They :probably are among those who have been given knowledge from Allah, as He says

Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in high .(degrees (۵۸:۱۱

The people of the straight path are bestowed with excellent bounties that are more precious than that of the complete faith and perfect belief. This is the second feature .of the straight path

Allah repeatedly mentions as-sirat (path) and as-sabīl (way) in the Qur'an; but He has never attributed to Himself except one straight path; although He attributes several .ways to Himself

And (as for) those who strive hard for Us. We will most certainly guide them onto Our .(ways (۲۹:۶۹

Likewise, He has never ascribed “the straight path” to any of his servants, the only exception being this verse under discussion which ascribes it to those who are bestowed with divine favours; but He frequently attributes “the way” to one or the :other of His chosen servants

Say: “This is my way; I invite you unto Allah; with clear sight(are) I and he who follows ;(me” (۱۲:۱۰۸

;(and follow the way of him who turns to Me (۳۱:۱۵ . . .

.(the way of the believers . . . (۴:l۱۵ . . .

It is an indication that “the way” is other than

."the straight path"

There may be various and different ways taken by various chosen servants proceeding on the way of worship and submission; but "the straight path" is only one, :as Allah points to it in these words

Indeed, there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allah; with it Allah guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter .(darkness into light by His permission and guides them to the straight path (۵:۱۵-۱۶

See, how the verse refers to "the ways" (in plural), and to "the straight path" (in singular). Now, there may be two explanations for it. Either "the straight path" is the same thing as "the ways", or "the ways" on going further join together and then merges into the straight path. There is another difference between the straight path :and the way. Allah says

.(And most of them do not believe in Allah without associating others (with Him) (۱۲:۱۰۶

Note how the believers are said to associate others with Allah. It shows that some sort of polytheism (that is, straying) may co-exist with belief (and the belief is a "way"); in other words the way may co-exist with polytheism. But the straight path .cannot do so because it is not the path of those who have gone astray

Each of these ways has some excellence or some deficiency - but not so the straight path. Each way is a part of the straight path, but is distinguished from the

other ways. It may be inferred from the above-mentioned verses as well as from :others. For example, Allah says

;(And that you worship Me; this is the straight path (۳۶: ۶۱

Say: "Surely,(as for) me, my Lord has guided me to the straight path; (to) a most right .(religion, the faith of Ibrahim the upright one" (۶:۱۶۱

The worship and the religion are common to all the ways, and they are also "the straight path". The relation of the straight path to the ways of Allah is that of the soul to the body. The body, during the life, undergoes countless changes, varies from day to day - from infancy to childhood; from adolescence to youth, from middle to old age .and to senility

But the soul remains the same, and is always one with body at every stage. Sometimes, the body is inflicted with undesirable effects, which the soul would never .accept, if left to itself

But the soul - the creation of Allah, upon which He created the man - never deteriorates. Yet, in all these states, the body remains one with the soul. Likewise, the ways of Allah are one with the straight path; but sometimes a way - the way of the believers, of the followers of the Prophet of those who turn towards Allah or any other way - suffers from some kind of deterioration, although the straight path is immune .from all defects and imperfections

You have seen how one of the ways, the belief, sometimes combines with polytheism and

straying, but the straight path does not do so. In short, the ways are of various grades -near or distant; safe or unsafe; clean or unclean - but all are in the straight path, or, .let us say, are one with the straight path

:Allah has mentioned this fact, in a parable of truth and falsehood, in these words

He sends down water from the heaven, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam; and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of(making) ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it; thus does Allah compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth; thus .(does Allah set forth parables (١٣:١٧

It clearly shows that the hearts and mind differ in their abilities and capacities to receive the divine knowledge and spiritual perfection, although all partake of the .(same divine sustenance. (Its full explanation will be written in the ch. ١٣

This was, however, the third feature of the straight path. From the above analysis it may be seen that the straight path is a sort of controller of all the ways leading to Allah. We may say that a way leading to Allah leads a man to Him as long as it remains one with the straight path; but the straight path leads to Allah unconditionally, without .any if or but

That is why

the straight path). as-Sirat = (الصراط المستقيم" Allah has named it "as-siratu '١-mustaqīm I swallowed it = (صرطتُ صرطاً " means a clear path, and is derived from "saratttu sartan completely); in other words, this clear path swallows its walkers without letting them straight) literally means the one who stands on his legs, = (المستقیم" go out. "al-Mustaqim .and has full control of himself as well as of the things attached to him

In other words, it is a thing which is not subjected to change or variation. Thus "as-siratu 'l-mustaqīm" =the straight path is the path which never fails to guide and to lead :the walker to his destination. Allah says

Then as for those who believe in Allah and hold fast unto Him, soon will He admit them to Mercy from Him and (His) Grace, and guide them unto Himself (by) the straight path .((۴:۱۷۵

:Obviously this guidance does not fail; it always succeeds. Also He has said

Therefore (for) whomsoever Allah intends that He would guide him aright, He expands his breast for Islam, and (for)whomsoever He intends that He should leave him to err, He makes his breast strait and narrow as though he were ascending into the sky; thus does Allah lay uncleanliness on those who do not believe. And this is the .(path of your Lord, (a) straight (path) (۶:۱۲۵ -۱۲۶

That is, this is Allah's path that never changes, nor does it fail to reach its destination. :Again He says

;He said: "This is a straight path with Me

surely as regards My servants, thou hast no authority over them except those who .(follow thee of the deviators" (۱۵:۴۱-۴۲

The verse declares that this is His settled course which never varies. In this way, it :conveys the same idea which is contained in the verse

For you shall not find any alteration in the course of Allah; and you shall not find any .(change in the course of Allah (۳۵:۴۳

:The above-mentioned discourse has made the following points clear

First: There are various ways to Allah, each differing with others in perfection, easiness and smoothness. It all depends on its nearness or remoteness from the basic reality, from the straight path, like the way of submission, of faith, of worship, of .purity of intention or of humility before Allah

Some of the ways leading to the opposite direction are disbelief, polytheism, infidelity, :exceeding the bounds, committing sins etc. Allah has said

And for all are grades according to what they did, and so that He may pay them back .(fully their deeds and they shall not be dealt with unjustly (۴۶:۱۹

The same is the case with the spiritual knowledge which the human mind receives from Allah. They vary according to mental and spiritual capacity of the receivers, and are tinted by colours of visions of the beholders. This fact is shown in the Qur'anic :parable mentioned earlier

He sends down water from the heaven, then the valleys flow according to their .(measure . . . (۱۳:۱۷

Second: The straight path controls all the ways. Likewise, the people

of the straight path (who have been firmly established in it by Allah) do enjoy complete authority to guide the other servants of Allah. Allah says:

. . . and excellent are these as companions (۴:۶۹);

Verily, your only Master is Allah and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayer and pay zakat while they are bowing down (۵:۵۵).

The last mentioned verse was revealed about 'Ali, the Leader of the faithful (a.s.), as al-mutawatir Tradition say; and he (peace be on him) was the first to open this door in Islam. More details of it will be given in the fifth chapter.

Third: The import of the guidance to the way depends on the meaning of the way itself. al-Hiddyah (الهِدایه) means to guide, to lead; it accepts two objects, either without any preposition (as in the language of Hijaz) or with ila (الی = to) before the second object (as in the language of other tribes). This detail has been given in as-Sihah of al-Jawharī, and obviously it is correct.

Before going further, a mistaken notion should be removed. Some people think that the meaning of guidance changes, depending on whether its second object is preceded by the preposition ila or not. If there is no such preposition, then according to them, guidance means "to convey to the destination"; if it is preceded by ila, then it denotes "to show the path."

In evidence, they offer the following verses:

Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He

.(pleases (۲۸:۵۶

This verse, in which the verbs, "cannot guide" and "guides", have been used without .preposition, says that the Prophet could not guide whom he pleased

But it is known that he, throughout his life, guided the people, that is, showed them .the path of Allah. Therefore, what has been negated must be the other meaning

What the verse, then, says is this: you cannot convey to the spiritual goal whom you please; but it is Allah who conveys to that destination whom He pleases. This :difference in meaning is more clearly seen in the verses

.(And We would certainly have guided them in the right path (۴:۶۸

The verb (in the Arabic text) has been used without any preposition and it refers to the divine guidance –that is, conveyance to destination. And Allah addresses the Prophet :in these words

.(and most surely you guide to the right path (۴۲:۵۲

Here the verb is followed by ila and the sentence attributes to the Prophet the task of .guidance, in the meaning of showing the way

According to their reasoning the three verses put together show that when guidance is used in the meaning of "conveying to destination", its second object accepts no .preposition; when it is used for "showing the path", the said object is preceded by ila

But this notion is not supported by the Qur'an. Allah quotes the believer of the people :of Pharaoh as saying

.(O my people! follow me, I will guide you to the right course" (۴۰:۳۸"

Here the Arabic text has no preposition

.and yet it does not mean conveying to destination, it only denotes showing the way

What has been mentioned in the verse ۲۸:۵۶ (Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He pleases) is the reality or perfection of guidance. The verse shows that the Prophet could not bestow on his people the perfect guidance, the .reality of guidance, as it was a task that Allah has reserved for Himself

In short, the meaning of guidance does not depend on preposition ila coming or not .coming before the second object. In both cases the meaning is the same

al-Hidayah means to guide, to show the destination by showing the way, or, let us say, to convey to the destination. Guidance, in reality, is reserved for Allah, and He guides His servants by creating such causes that point the destination to them and .lead them to their spiritual goal

:Allah says

Therefore (for) whomsoever Allah intends that He would guide him aright, He ;(expands his breast for Islam (۶:۱۲۵

then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of Allah; this is . . . .(Allah's guidance, He guides with it whom He pleases (۳۹:۲۳

The verb "become pliant" is followed by the preposition "to", giving the verb a shade of meaning of inclination and repose. Guidance, thus, means that Allah creates in the heart an aptitude by which it initiates, accepts, inclines towards and becomes serene .in the remembrance of Allah

It has been mentioned earlier that there are many ways leading to

Allah. Consequently, guidance for one way would differ from those of the others. Each :way has a special guidance of its own. This variation has been hinted at in the verse

And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them unto Our .(ways; and Allah is most surely with the doers of good (۲۹:۶۹

A man strives "in the way of Allah"; and another strives "for Allah". There is a great difference between the two. The first tries to keep the way safe and free from all .dangers and blockades; the second's attention is fixed on Allah only

It is this man who is praised in this verse - he strives hard for Allah; thereupon Allah helps him and guides him on the way most suited to his ability and power; and thereafter keeps guiding him from one way to another until He exclusively attaches .him to Himself

Fourth: The straight path is preserved in the ways of Allah - the ways that are of various grades and levels. Allah guides man to it; and the man is thus guided aright. As mentioned above, Allah may keep guiding a man from one way to the other which is .of a higher grade, and then to a third one still higher

The prayer in this verse, "Guide us to the straight path" (revealed on behalf of those whom Allah has already guided to His worship) points to this very fact. If we keep this point in view, there would be

no room for an objection like the following: The one who utters this prayer is already ?guided aright - how can he pray afresh for guidance

It would be an attempt to reobtain a thing which is already in hand, and it is just impossible. Also, the worshipper is already on the straight path - how can he pray to ?be guided again to the same path? Isn't it an impossibility

.But the explanation given by us clears away the mist of such objections

Another objection: Our Law is the most perfect and most comprehensive of all the laws sent by Allah since the dawn of humanity. Why should we ask from Allah to guide ?us to the path of those of the previous people upon whom He had bestowed favours

Reply: Admittedly, the Law brought by Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is more perfect than any other one. But it does not necessarily mean that all those who follow this Law are more perfect than all those who followed the previous laws. An average follower of the law of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) cannot surpass Nuh or Ibrahim (a.s.) , although their .laws were sent long before the Islamic Law

It is one thing to accept and follow a law; it is quite another to get spiritual perfection by total submission - by perfectly moulding oneself in that law's pattern. A believer of previous nations who attained a high spiritual level, who became a mirror of divine attributes, is most certainly better than, and superior to, a follower of

this law who did not reach that state - even though the latter would be following the .(.most perfect and comprehensive law, that is, the Law of Muhammad (s.a.w.a

Therefore, it is quite in order for a believer of lower grade (although he may follow a perfect law) to pray to Allah to help him reach the level of a believer of higher grade .((although he might have followed a less perfect law

An exegete has replied to the above-mentioned objection in a way that is not free from defects. He has said: The religion of Allah is one, and that is Islam. The fundamental truths - the belief in One God, the Prophethood and the Day of Judgement and all that results from this belief - are the same in all the laws and .revelations sent by Allah

The Law of Islam has an added distinction, in that it covers all aspects of human life and is, thus, the most comprehensive one. It looks more properly after public welfare. Moreover, its foundation is laid on reasoning - in all its forms: The logic, the .admonition and the goodly argumentation

All divine religions are, thus, the same and the fundamental truths are common to all. The previous people have preceded us in this path. Therefore, Allah has ordered us to look into their affairs, to take lessons from them and to follow them to spiritual .perfection

The author says: The principle upon which this reply is based is against the principles that guide us in

exegesis of the Qur'an. The reply assumes that the realities of fundamental truths are on the same level in all the religions; that there is no difference in their grades; that the spiritual perfections and religious virtues are of the same quality everywhere.

According to this view, the highest ranking prophet is equal to the lowest type of believer in his existence and natural perfection – so far as his creation is concerned. The difference, if any, is based on the subjective outlook of sharī'ah, not on any matter of creation.

In their opinion, this case is similar to that of a king vis-a-vis his subjects – they are not different in their human existence, the difference is in their subjective and assumed positions only which are laid down by people and which do not have any independent existence.

This thinking, in its turn, is based on the theory of materialism, which teaches that nothing exists but matter; metaphysical "things" have no existence at all (or, at least, we are not in a position to know that they exist). The only exception is God, and we believe in His existence because of logical evidence.

Those who accepted this view did so because, coming under the influence of natural sciences, they put all their confidence in their five senses. Or because they thought that "commonsense" was enough for explaining the divine words, and therefore, neglected to meditate on the Qur'an. God willing, we shall throw more light on this subject at some other place.

Fifth: The

people of the straight path are higher in rank than others, and their path is superior to the others' ways. It is because of their knowledge, and not because of their virtuous deeds. They have that knowledge of divine attributes which is hidden from others. (We have explained earlier that perfection of virtuous deeds is found in some of the .inferior ways also

Therefore, deeds cannot be the criterion by which the people of the straight path are given excellence over the rest.) The question arises as to what is that knowledge and how it is acquired. We shall deal with these questions when we shall explain the verse ۱۳:۱۷

He sends down water from the heaven, then the valleys flow according to their) .(measure

:The following verses too point to this fact

Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge in higher ;(degrees (۵۸:۱۱

.(To Him do ascend the good words; and the good deed lifts them up (۳۵:۱۰

What ascends to Allah is the good words, that is, true belief and knowledge; good deeds lift up the good words and help them in their ascension, without themselves .going up. We shall fully discuss this verse when we shall reach it

Tradition

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the meaning of worship: "Worship is of three kinds: some people worship Allah, because they fear Him - so it is the worship of slaves; and a group worships Allah, Blessed and High is He, to seek reward - so it is the worship of

hirelings; and a group worships Allah, Mighty and Great is He, because of (His) love - (and this is the worship of noble persons, and it is the most excellent worship." (al-Kafi

Verily, some people worshipped Allah being desirous (of His reward) - so this is the worship of traders; and some people worshipped Allah fearing (His punishment) - so it is the worship of slaves, and a group worshipped Allah in gratitude (to Him) -so this is (the worship of noble men. (Nahju '۱-baldghah

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Verily people worship Allah in three ways: One group worships Him in desire of His reward, and it is the worship of covetous ones, and it is greed; and others worship Him in dread of the Fire, and it is the worship of slaves, and it is fear; but I worship Him in His love - Mighty and Great is He and this is the worship of noble .ones

:It is) because Allah has said)

;(and they shall be secure from terror on that days (۲۷:۸۹

,and He has said

.(Say: `If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you. . .' (۳:۳۱

Therefore, whosoever is loved by Allah, he shall be among the secure ones; and it is a hidden position, cannot touch it save the purified ones." (al-`Ilal, al-Majalis and al-(Khisal

The author says: The meaning of these Tradition may be understood from the preceding Commentary. The Imams (of Ahlu '۱-bayt) have variously attributed the worship of the noble ones sometimes to gratitude and sometimes

to love, because in final analysis both are one and the same. Gratitude and .thankfulness means putting the received bounty in its proper place

It is the thankfulness for worship that should be addressed to Allah, as only He, Himself, deserves to be worshipped. Allah is worshipped because He is Allah, that is, because He alone holds all attributes of beauty and glory. He, of all things, is Beautiful; He alone is loved for Himself. What is love? It is inclination and attraction towards .beauty

We say: He is worshipped because He is He; we may express the same idea if we say: He is worshipped because He is beautiful and beloved. Again, the same theme may be explained by saying that He is worshipped because He is the Bestower of favours and .is thanked through worship. All three expressions carry the same import

It has been narrated through Sunni chains that as-Sadiq (a.s.) explained the verse, “Thee do we worship . . .” in these words: “We do not ask from Thee other than Thee, and we do not worship Thee by substitute and replacement, as do those who are ”.ignorant of Thee, removed from Thee

The author says: This tradition points to what has been explained in the Commentary that worship demands presence (of heart) and purity (of intention) which does not .allow diversion to any substitute, to anything else

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said inter alia in a tradition: “And whosoever thinks that he worships ,(Allah) by (His) attributes without being conscious of Him

he refers (his worship) to an absent one; and whosoever thinks that he worships the attribute and the person (having that attribute) he nullifies monotheism, because the attribute is other than the person; and whosoever thinks that he ascribes the person to the attribute, he belittles the Great One, and they do not assign to Allah His proper (prestige . . .' " (Tuhafu '۱-'uqūl

as-Sadiq (a.s.) explained the verse: Guide us to the straight path, in these words: "Guide us to adhere to the path that leads to Thy love, and conveys to Thy Garden, (the path that) prevents us from following our desires (lest we be ruined) and from (adhering to our opinions (lest we be destroyed). (Ma`ani 'l-akhadr

The same book quotes `Ali (a.s.) as saying about this verse: "Continue for us Thy help with which we obeyed Thee in our past days, so that we continue to obey Thee in our ".coming days also

The author says: The two Tradition point to two aspects of the reply of the previously mentioned objection - that the prayer for guidance, addressed by a person already guided aright, is trying to obtain a thing in hand, and that it was asking for impossible. The first tradition looks at the difference in the grades of guidance, and the second .looks at oneness of guidance in its reality

Again Ma'ani 'l-akhbar quotes 'Ali (a.s.) as saying: "The straight path, in this world, is that which stops short of excesses and rises above shortcomings, and remains

straight; and, in the next world, it is the path of the believers (leading them) to the ".Garden

The same book quotes the same Imam, explaining the verse: The path of those. . ., as follows: "Say: Guide us to the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours by strengthening them for Thy religion and Thy obedience - not (of those whom Thou favoured) with wealth and health because such things are sometimes given even to ".the disbelievers or to the sinful

Then he said:) "And those (bestowed with divine favour) are those about whom Allah) :says

And whoever obeys Allah and the Apostle, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the .(righteous ones, and excellent are these as companions (۴:۶۹

ar-Rida (a.s.) narrates through his forefathers from Amir al-mu'minin (a.s.) that he said: "I heard the Apostle of Allah saying: 'Allah, Mighty and Great is He, has said: "I have divided the Opening of the Book between Myself and My servant; so, its half is for Me and the (other) half is for My servant. And My servant shall get what he asks ".for

When the servant says: In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, Allah, Great is His Glory, says: "My servant has started with My name, and it is incumbent upon Me ".that I should complete his works for him and bless him in his affairs

And when he says: All praise is due

to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, Allah, Great is His Glory, says: “My servant has praised Me, and he knows that the bounties that are with him are from Me, and that the misfortunes that have been averted from him were so averted by My grace; (O My angels!) I appoint you as My witnesses that I shall add for him the favours of the next world to those of this world, and will avert from him the calamities of the next world as ”.I have averted from him the calamities of this world

And when he says, The Beneficent, the Merciful, Allah, Great is His Glory, says: “My servant bore witness for Me that I am the Beneficent, the Merciful; I make you My witness that I will most surely augment his share in My mercy, and I will most ”.certainly increase his portion in My bounties

And when he says, The Master of the Day of Judgement, Allah, the High, says: “I make you My witness that, as he has acknowledged that I am the Master of the Day of Judgement, I will most certainly make his reckoning easier (for him) on the Day of ”.Reckoning, and I will most certainly accept his good deeds, and look over his sins

And when he says: Thee do we worship, Allah, Mighty and Great is He, says: “My servant is telling truth, He worships Me only. Be My witness that I will most surely give him for his worship a reward that

".will be the (object of) envy to all who opposed him when he worshipped Me

And when he says, and Thee do we beseech for help, Allah, the High, says: "From Me has My servant sought help, and in Me has he taken refuge. Be My witness that I will most certainly help him in his affairs, and will aid him in his difficulties, and will take his ".hand in his calamities

And when he says, Guide us to the right path . . ., Allah, Mighty and Great is He, says: "This (part) is for My servant, and My servant shall have what he asks for; and I have answered (the prayer of) My servant, and have given him what he hopes for and have .(protected him from what he is afraid of." ' " (`Uyūnu 'l-akhbar

The author says: as-Sadūq has narrated in `Ilalu 'sh-shara'i `, an almost similar tradition from ar-Rida (a.s.). The tradition explains the chapter of The Opening in the .frame of the daily prayer

It further confirms the previously mentioned fact that this divine revelation has been sent, as though on behalf of the servants of Allah, to teach them the manners of servitude; to show them how to praise their Lord and how to declare their allegiance to Him. It is a chapter made especially for the purpose of worship; and no other :chapter comes near to it in this respect. For example

The entire chapter is a divine speech, revealed on behalf of His servant, so .١

.that he may recite it when he stands to worship his Lord

.It is divided in two parts: one for Allah and the other for the servant .۲

It contains, in spite of its brevity, all the Qur'anic wisdom. The Qur'an is a vast .۳ treasure of fundamental truths, moral values and the most comprehensive sharī `ah which consists of the rules of worship and mutual dealings, as well as the penal and civil codes. Further it is a valuable mine of divine promises and threats, stories of .previous peoples as well as parables and moral lessons

But, in spite of this wide scope, all its teachings may be returned to four fundamental truths: the Oneness of God, the prophethood, the resurrection (with all its details) and the guidance of mankind to its bliss in this world as well as in the next. Needless to reiterate that this chapter contains all these basic realities in these very short, and at .the same time very eloquent, sentence

It will not be out of place to compare the beauty, glory and spirituality of this chapter, used in the Muslims' prayers, with the Lord's prayer, used by the Christians in their :prayer

.Our Father which art in heaven Hallowed be thy name

.Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven

.Give us this day our daily bread

.And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors

:And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and

,the glory

(for ever. Amen. (Matthews ۶:۹ -۱۳

Ponder deeply on the teachings contained in these sentences, supposed to be of divine revelation, and see what manners of servitude does this prayer teach. First it tells them that their Father (i.e. God, in their terminology) is in heaven. Then it prays about the Father that His name be hallowed, His kingdom come and His will be done in .earth as it is in heaven

The question is: Who will fulfill these wishes which look more like political slogans than spiritual invocation. Then it makes them ask for their daily bread, and for His forgiveness in lieu of their forgiveness - that He should waive His rights as they have waived theirs. But what right do they possess except that which they have been given ?by God Himself

Then they beseech Him not to lead them into temptation but to deliver them from evil. This is asking for im possible, because this world is the place appointed for our test and trial, so that we may acquire spiritual perfection. Would not salvation lose its ?meaning, if there was no test and trial

And yet some orientalists have temerity to write: "Islam does not have any superiority over other religions, so far as spiritual knowledge is concerned, because all divine religions invite the men to the belief in one God, and ask them to purify themselves by good character and virtuous deeds. The religions excel one another only in deep-".rootedness of their social fruits

It is

narrated in Man la yahduruhu '١-faqīh and at-Tafsīr of al-`Ayyashi that as-Sadiq (a.s.) ".(.said: "The straight path is Amīru'l-mu'minīn (a.s

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "(The straight path) is the path to the knowledge of Allah. And there are two paths, one in this world and the other in the next. As for the path in this world, it is the Imam whose obedience is obligatory; whosoever knows him in this world and follows his guidance, he shall proceed on the path which is the bridge over the hell in the next world; and whosoever does not know him in this world, his foot shall slip (over that bridge) in the next world, and he shall fall down into the fire of the (hell." (Ma`ani '١-akhbar

The same book quotes as-Sajjad (a.s.) as saying: "There is no curtain between Allah and His proof, nor is there any screen for Allah against His proof. We are the gates of Allah, and we are the straight path, and we are the (treasure) chest of His Knowledge, and we are the interpreters of His revelation, and we are the pillars of His Oneness, ".and we are the place of His secret

Ibn Shahrashūb has quoted from at-Tafsīr of Wakī 'ibn al-Jarrah from ath-Thawrī from as-Suddī from Asbat and Mujahid from Ibn `Abbas that he said about the verse: Guide us to the straight path: "Say O group of the servants (of Allah): Lead us to the ".love of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and his family members

The author says: There are

other Tradition of the same meaning. Such Tradition are based on the “flow” of the Qur'an, that is, application of the Qur'an wherever it is applicable. It should be noted that the term, “flow” – and it will often be used in this book – has been taken from the :(.Tradition of the Imams of Ahlu 'I-bayt (a.s

al-Fudayl ibn Yasar said: “I asked Abu Ja'far (a.s.) about the tradition, `There is no verse in the Qur'an but it has an exterior and an interior, and there is no word in it but it has a boundary, and every boundary has a watching place.' (I asked him) what was .the meaning of exterior and interior

The Imam said: `Its exterior is its revelation and its interior is its interpretation; some of it has already passed (i. e. happened) and some of it has not come about yet; it runs along (or flows) as run the sun and the moon; when a thing of it comes (to its (appointed place and time) it happens . . . (at-Tafsīr, of al -`Ayyashī

This theme is found in other Tradition too. It is the convention of the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.) that they apply a Qur'anic verse to all things it may be applied to. And this convention was correct and reasonable, because the Qur'an was revealed as a “guidance to the worlds”; it guides the mankind to correct belief, correct ethics and correct action. The matter of belief that it has explained is eternal

.truth; it is not limited to a certain time or certain place

The virtue or vice and the rules laid down for them are not confined to one person or one period - they are general and applicable to all relevant persons and times. The Tradition explaining the background of revelation of a certain verse - when, why and .about whom or what was it revealed - do not affect its general import

The rule is not restricted to that particular person or event; otherwise, it would cease to be valid in other similar conditions, and would die with the death of that person. The Qur'anic declaration is general. If it praises some persons, or condemns some others, .it is because of the presence of good or evil characteristics in them

And wherever those good or evil characteristics are found, even in later generations, :the verse will in all truth be applied to them. The Qur'an itself proves it, as Allah says

With it (i.e., the Qur'an) Allah guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of ;(safety . . . (۵:۱۶

and most surely it is a Mighty Book, falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor . . . ; (from behind it (۴۱:۴۱-۴۲

. (Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian (۱۵:۹

There are numerous Tradition, perhaps reaching to hundreds, which apply various verses of the Qur'an to the Imams or to their enemies. They are called the Tradition of “flow”. But now that

the general principle has been explained, we shall not include those Tradition in this book – except where it becomes necessary for the explanation of a verse or for some .reasoning or discussion

Suratul Baqarah, The Chapter of The Cow ۲:۱–۵

point

verses – Medina ۲۸۶

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(۱) الم

(۲) ذَلِکَ الْکِتَابُ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

(۳) الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

(۴) وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْکَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِکَ وَبِالآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

(۵) أُوْلَئِکَ عَلَى هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِکَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

.In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

.(Alif Lam mīm (۱

,(This Book, there is no doubt in it, (is) a guidance to those who guard (against evil) (۲

Those who believe in the unseen and keep up the prayer and spend (benevolently) ,(out of what We have given them (۳

And who believe in that which has been sent down to thee and that which was sent .(down before thee and they are sure of the hereafter (۴

These are on a guidance from their Lord and these it is that shall be the successful .(ones (۵

General Comment

This chapter was revealed piecemeal; therefore, it does not have a single theme. However a major part of it shows a general objective: It emphasizes that a man cannot be a true servant of Allah unless he believes in all that was revealed to the apostles of Allah without making any difference between revelation and revelation, or between apostle and apostle; accordingly, it admonishes and condemns the disbelievers, the hypocrites and the people of the book because they differed about

the religion of Allah and differentiated between His apostles; thereafter it ordains various important laws, like change of the direction to which the Muslims were to turn .for their prayers, regulations of hajj, inheritance and fasting and so on

Commentary

Qur’an: Alif lam mīm: God willing, we shall describe in the ۴۲nd chapter some things related to the “letter-symbols” that come at the beginning of some chapters. Also, the meaning of the guidance of the Qur'an and of its being a book will be explained later .on

Qur’an: This Book, there is no doubt in it, (is) guidance to those who guard (against evil), those who believe in the unseen: Those who guard against evil, or in other words, the pious ones, are the very people who believe. Piety, or guarding oneself .against evil, is not a special virtue of any particular group of the believers

It is not like doing good, being humble before God or purity of intention, which are counted as various grades of the faith. Piety, on the other hand, is a comprehensive virtue that runs through all the ranks of the true faith. It is for this reason that Allah .has not reserved this adjective for any particular group of the believers

The characteristics of piety, enumerated in these four verses, are five: Believing in the unseen, keeping up prayers, spending benevolently out of what Allah has given, believing in what Allah has revealed to His apostles, and being sure of the hereafter. The pious ones acquire these spiritual qualities

by guidance from Allah, as Allah tells us in the next verse: "These are on a guidance from their Lord."

They became pious and guarded themselves against evil because Allah had guided them to it. When they got that quality, the Qur'an became guidance for them: "This Book . . . (is) a guidance to those who guard against evil". It clearly shows that there are two guidances, one before they became pious, the other after it. The first guidance made them pious; and thereupon Allah raised their status by the guidance of His Book.

The contrast is thus made clear between the pious ones on one hand and the disbelievers and the hypocrites (who are admonished in the next fifteen verses) on the other. The later two groups are surrounded by two strayings and two blindnesses. Their first straying causes their unbelief and hypocrisy, and the second one (which comes after their unbelief and hypocrisy) confirms their first error and strengthens it.

Look at what Allah says about the disbelievers:

Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing; and there is a covering over their eyes (٢:٧).

Sealing their hearts has been ascribed to Allah, but the covering over their eyes was put by the disbelievers themselves. Likewise, Allah says about the hypocrites:

There is a disease in their hearts, so Allah added to their disease (٢:١٠).

The first disease is attributed to the hypocrites themselves, and the second one to Allah. The same reality has been explained in many

:verses. For example

He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright by it! But He does not cause to ;(err by it (any) except the transgressors (۲:۲۶

.(but when they turned aside, Allah made their hearts turn aside (۶۱:۵ . . .

In short, the pious ones are surrounded by two guidances, as the disbelievers and hypocrites fall between two errors. The second guidance is by the Qur'an; therefore, the first one must have been before the Qur'an. They must have been guided by a healthy and unimpaired psychology. If a man's nature is faultless and flawless, it .cannot fail to see that it is dependent on something above it

Also, it realizes that every other thing, which it may perceive, imagine or understand, depends likewise or, a thing outside the chain of dependent and needy things. Thus, it comes to believe that there must be a Being, unseen and imperceptible through the .senses, who is the beginning and end of every other thing

It also sees that the said Essential Being does not neglect even the smallest detail when it comes to creative perfection of His creatures. This makes him realize that the said Creator cannot leave the man to wander aimlessly hither and thither in his life; that He must have provided for him a guidance to lead him aright in his actions and .morals

By this healthy reasoning, the man acquires the belief in One God, in the institution of prophethood and in the Day of Resurrection. In this

way, his faith in the fundamentals of religion becomes complete. That faith leads him to show his servitude before his Lord, and to use all that is in his power - wealth, prestige, knowledge, power, and any other excellence - to keep this faith alive and to .convey it to others

Thus we come to the prayer and benevolent spending. The five virtues enumerated in these verses are such that a healthy nature unfailingly leads the man to them. Once a man reaches this stage, Allah bestows on him His other grace, that is, the guidance by .the Qur'an

The above-mentioned five qualities - correct belief and correct deeds - fall between two guidances, a preceding one and a following one. This second guidance is based on .the first one

: This fact has been described in the following verses

Allah confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the .(hereafter (۱۴:۲۷

O you who believe! fear Allah and believe in His apostle. He will give you two portions .(of His mercy, and make for you a light with which you will walk . . . (۵۷:۲۸

.(O you who believe! if you help Allah, He will help you and make firm your feet (۴۷:۷

. (And Allah does not guide the unjust people (۶۱:۷

.(and Allah does not guide the transgressing people (۶۱:۵ . . .

The same is the case with error and straying of the disbelievers and hypocrites, as will .be seen later on

The above verses give an indication that

man has another life, hidden behind this one. It is by that life that he lives in this world :as well as after death and at resurrection. Allah says

Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness .(whence he cannot come forth . . . (۶:۱۲۲

.We shall explain it, God willing, later on

faith, to believe) is consolidation = الایمان) "Those who believe in the unseen" "al- Īman safety, to feel safe). The believer, by = الأمن) of belief in heart. It is derived from al-amn his belief and faith, gains safety from doubts. (Needless to say that doubt is like a (.poison to the faith

It has already been explained that faith has many grades. Sometimes one is certain of the object of faith; and this certainty has its effects; at other times the certainty increases and includes some concomitants of the said object; and at times it .increases to include all the related matters of the object of faith

"Naturally, the belief, thus, is of various grades and so are the believers. "al-Ghayb the unseen) is opposite of "the perceived". It is used for Allah, and His great = الغَيْب) signs, including the revelation, which is referred to in the clause, "And who believe in ."that which has been sent down to thee and that which was sent down before thee

.Also, it includes the hereafter

But in these verses, the beliefs in the revelation and in the hereafter have been separately mentioned. Therefore, “the unseen” must have been used for Allah only. In .this way the belief in the three fundamentals of religion becomes complete

The Qur'an emphasizes that man should not confine his knowledge and belief to only .the perception; it exhorts him to follow healthy reasoning and rational understanding

Qur’an: and they are sure of the hereafter: Instead of only believing in the hereafter, they are sure of it. There is an indication here that one cannot be pious, cannot guard himself against evil, until he is really certain of the hereafter - a certainty that does not let him forget it even for a short time. A man believes in a matter, yet sometimes .forgets some of its demands and then commits something contrary

But if he believes in, and is sure of, the day when he shall have to give account of all that he has done -big or small - he will not do anything against the divine law, will not :commit any sin. Allah says

and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allah; (as . . . for) those who go astray from the path of Allah, for them surely is a severe .(punishment because they forgot the day of reckoning (۳۸:۲۶

Clearly it is because of forgetting the Day of Reckoning that man goes astray. It follows that if one remembers it and is sure

.of it, he will surely guard himself against evil, will become pious

Qur'an: These are on guidance from their Lord and these it is that shall be the successful ones: Guidance is always from Allah, it is not ascribed to anyone else .except in a metaphorical way

:Allah describes His guidance in these words

Therefore (for) whomsoever Allah intends that He would guide him aright; He .(expands his breast for Islam . . . (۶:۱۲۵

.If one's breast is expanded, he will be free from every tightness and niggardliness

:And Allah says that

whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the . . . .(successful ones (۵۹:۹

Therefore, He says in this verse about those who are on His guidance that "they shall ."be the successful ones

Tradition

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: Those who believe in the unseen: "Those one who stands, i.e., al-Mahdi, the twelfth = القائِم) who believe in the rising of al- Qa'im (Imam - a. s.) that it is truth." (Ma'ani '۱-akhbar

The author says: This explanation is given in other Tradition also; and it is based on .the "flow" of the Qur'an

According to at-Tafsīr of al-`Ayyashi, as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: and spend (benevolently) out of what We have given them, that it means: the .knowledge We have given them

In Ma`ani 'l-akhbar, the same Imam has explained it in these words: "And they spread the knowledge We have given them and they recite what We have taught them of

.the Qur'an

The author says: Both Tradition explain the "spending" in a wider sense that includes spending the wealth as well as using other bounties of Allah in His cause; the explanation given by us earlier is based on this exegesis.

A Philosophical Discussion

Should we rely on rational concepts, in addition to the things perceptible through the senses? It is a subject of great controversy among the western scholars of the later days. All Muslim philosophers as well as most of the western ones of ancient times believed that we can rely on the rational as well as the sensual perceptions.

They were rather of the opinion that an academic premises does not look at a tangible and sensual factor as such. But most of the modern scholars, especially the scientists, hold that nothing can be relied upon except what one perceives through the five senses. Their proof is as follows:

Pure rational proofs often go wrong. There is no test or experiment, perceptible through the senses, to verify those rational proofs or their premises.

Sensual perceptions are free from this defect; when we perceive a thing through a sense, we verify it through repeated tests and experiments; this testing continues till we are sure of the characteristics or properties of the object of test.

Therefore, sensual perception is free from doubt, while rational proof is not.

But this argument has many flaws:

First: All the above-mentioned premises are rational; they cannot be perceived by any of the five senses. In other words, these scholars are using rational premises, to

prove that rational premises cannot be relied upon! What a paradox! If they succeed in proving their view-point through these premises, their very success would prove them wrong.

Second: Sensual perception is not less prone to error and mistake than rational proof. A cursory glance at the books dealing with the optics and other such subjects is enough to show how many errors are made by sight, hearing and other senses. If rational proof is unreliable because of its possible mistakes, sensual perception also should be discarded for the same reason.

Third: No doubt, there should be a way to distinguish the right perception from the wrong. But it is not the "repeated testing", per se, that creates that distinction in our mind. Rather, it becomes one of the premises of a rational proof which in turn provides that distinction.

When we discover a property of an object, and the property remains the same through repeated tests, a rational proof, on the following lines, is offered by our thinking power. If this property were not this thing's own property, it would not be found in it so unfailingly; But it is always found in it without fail; Therefore, it is its own property. It is now obvious that sensual perception too depends on rational premises to finalize its findings.

Fourth: Let us admit that practically every sensual perception is supported by test. But is that test verified by another test? If yes, then the same question will arise about this later one. Obviously, it

cannot go on adinfinitum; there must come at the end a test whose verification depends not on a visible test but on the above-mentioned rational proof. It means .that one cannot rely on sensual perception without relying on rational concepts

Fifth: The five senses cannot perceive absolute and major issues; they know only the particular and minor things. Knowledge depends on absolute issues, which cannot be .tested in a laboratory nor can they be grasped by the five senses

A professor of anatomy operates upon, or dissects, a number of living or dead human bodies - it does not matter how large or small that number is. He finds that each of the .bodies - which he has opened - has a heart, a liver and the like

And after looking at those particular cases, he feels bold enough to teach an absolute proposition that all men have a heart and a liver. The question is: Has he seen inside "all" the human beings? If only that much can be relied upon which is perceived by the five senses, how can any absolute proposition of any branch of science be accepted ?as true

The fact is that sensual perception and rational concept both have their place in the field of knowledge; both are complementary to each other. By rationality and understanding, we mean that faculty which is the source of the above examples of .absolute principles

Everyone knows that man has such a faculty. How can a faculty created by Allah (or ,as they say

by nature) be always in wrong? How can it always fail in the function entrusted to it by the Creator? The Creator never entrusts any work to an agent until He creates a .connecting link between them

So far as mistakes in rational and sensual faculties are concerned, the reader should .look for it in related subjects like logic etc

Another Philosophical Discussion

point

Man in his early childhood perceives the objects around him; he knows them without knowing that he knows, that is, without being aware that he has, or is using, a faculty called knowledge or cognition. This continues until a time comes when he finds himself doubting or presuming a thing. Then he realizes that before that he was using ."knowledge" in his life affairs

He also gradually comes to understand that his perception or concepts are sometimes wrong, that error cannot be in the materials that he perceives - because those material things are facts and facts cannot be non-facts, that is, cannot be wrong. Therefore, the error must be in his perception. When there is no error in .perception, it is knowledge - a perception that leaves no room for opposite ideas

By these stages, he becomes aware of the basic principle that positive and negative are mutually exclusive and totally exhaustive; they are contradictories, they cannot .both be present nor can both be absent

This fundamental truth is the foundation-stone of every self-evident or theoretical proposition. (Even if one doubts this statement, he intuitively knows that this "doubt" cannot be present with its

(."negative, with its "nondoubt

Man relies on knowledge in every academic theory and practical function. Even when he feels doubtful about a matter, he identifies that doubt by knowing that it is a doubt. The same applies when he does not know, or only presumes, or merely imagines a thing, he identifies it by the knowledge that it is ignorance, presumption or .imagination

But in ancient Greece, there arose a group, the Sophists, who denied existence of knowledge. They showed doubt in everything, even in their own selves, even in that doubt. The Skeptics of later days are almost their successors. They deny knowledge of everything outside their own selves and their own minds. Their "arguments" run as :follows

First: The most potent knowledge (that comes through the five senses) is often wrong and in error. Then how can one be sure of the knowledge obtained through other sources? How can we rely, in this background, on any knowledge or proposition ?outside our own selves

Second: When we wish to comprehend any outside object, what we get is merely its knowledge; we do not grasp the object itself. Then, how can it be possible to grasp ?any object

Reply to the First Argument

First: This argument negates and annihilates itself. If no proposition can be relied ?upon, how can one rely on the propositions and premises used in this argument

Second: To say that a source of knowledge is "often" wrong is to admit that it is also ?correct many times. Then how can it be rejected totally

Third: We have never

said that our knowledge is always correct. The Sophists and the Sceptics affirm that no knowledge is correct. To refute this universal negative proposition, a particular affirmative proposition is sufficient. That is, we have only to prove that some knowledge is correct; and we have done so in the second reply.

Reply to the Second Argument

The issue in dispute is knowledge, which means to unveil an object. The Sceptics admit that when they try to comprehend an object, they get its knowledge. Their only complaint is that they do not grasp the object itself.

But nobody has ever claimed that knowledge means grasping the object itself; our only claim is that knowledge unveils some of the realities of its object, that is, of the thing so known.

Moreover, the Sceptic refutes his own views practically in every movement and at every moment. He claims that he does not know anything outside his own self, outside his own mind. But when he is hungry or thirsty, he moves to the food or water; when he sees a wall falling down, he runs away from it.

But he does not try to get food when he just thinks about hunger, and does not run away when he just thinks about a falling wall. It means that he does not act on the pictures in his mind - which he claims are the real things, and acts on that feeling or perception which comes to him from outside - which, according to him, does not have any reality and should not

be relied upon!

There is another objection against existence of knowledge. They deny existence of established knowledge; and have laid the foundation of today's natural sciences on this rejection. Their reasoning is as follows:

Every single atom in this world is in constant movement; every single thing is continuously moving towards perfection or deterioration. In other words, what a thing was at a given instant, is not the same in the next. Understanding and perception is a function of brain. Therefore, it is a material property of a material compound.

Naturally, this process too is governed by the laws of change and development. It means that all functions of brain, including knowledge, are constantly changing and developing. It is, therefore, wrong to say that there is any such thing as established knowledge. Whatever knowledge there is has only relative permanence - some propositions last longer than others. And it is this impermanent conception that is called knowledge.

Reply: This argument is based on the presumption that knowledge is not non-material and abstract; that it is a physical thing. But this supposition is neither self-evident nor proved. Knowledge is certainly non-material and abstract. It is not a physical and material thing, because the attributes and properties of matter are not found in it:

١. All material things are divisible; knowledge, per se, is not divisible.

٢. Material things depend on space and time; knowledge, per se, is independent of space and time. An event happens in a certain place and time, but we may comprehend it in

.any place and at any time without any adverse effect on its comprehension

Material things are admittedly governed by the law of general movement and .٣ constant change. But knowledge, per se, does not change. Knowledge, as knowledge, .is incompatible with change, as one may understand after a little meditation

Suppose that knowledge, per se, is subject to constant change like matter and .۴ material things. Then one thing or event could not be comprehended with the same details, in exactly the same way, at two different times. Nor could a past event be remembered correctly later on. Because, as the materialists have said, "what a ."(material) thing was at a given instant is not the same in the next

These comparisons show that knowledge, as knowledge, is not a material or physical thing. It must be told here that we are not talking about the physical actions and reactions which an organ of a sense or the brain has to undergo in the process of acquiring knowledge. That action and reaction is a process, or a tool, of knowledge, it .is not the knowledge itself

.For more detailed discussion of this subject one should study the philosophical works

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۶-۷

point

(۶) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

(۷) خَتَمَ اللّهُ عَلَى قُلوبِهمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Surely those who disbelieve, alike is it to them whether you warn them or do not warn .(them, they will not believe (۶

Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and

upon their hearing; and there is a covering over their eyes; and for them is a great .(punishment (٧

Commentary

Qur'an: Surely those who disbelieve. . . will not believe: They were the people who obstinately clung to rejection of faith and in whose hearts disbelief had established deep roots. This may be inferred from the fact that warning them and not warning .them was all alike to them; they would not move from their obduracy

Probably it refers to the disbelievers of Quraysh, who were the bitterest enemies of Islam and who did try their utmost to extinguish the light of faith; they persisted .stubbornly in their enmity until Allah destroyed them in Badr and other battles

The sentence, "alike is it to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe", strengthens this interpretation; because it could not be applied to all the disbelievers of the world – otherwise the door of guidance would be closed. Also, .this same sentence has come in Chapter of Yasin (٣۶:١٠) which is a Meccan chapter

Then it appears in this chapter that is the first chapter revealed at Medina. (It was revealed before the battle of Badr.) Therefore, more probably this verse also refers to the same Meccan group. In other places too the same explanation may be given to .the word, "those who disbelieve", unless there is a reason to the contrary

Likewise, wherever the word, "those who believe", has been used in the Qur'an it refers to the first

and early Muslims - unless there is any reason to believe otherwise. .This style of .address was reserved for them as a protocol of honour

Qur'an: Allah has set a seal. . . great punishment: Allah has ascribed the sealing to His own action, but the covering over their eyes is attributed to their own selves. It shows that they had put a curtain on their souls against the light of truth - it was their own .choice

Then, after their sins and disbelief, Allah put another curtain or seal over their souls. Their disbelief and misdeeds thus fall between two curtains - the first from them... .selves, the second from Allah

;Its further explanation will be given under ۲:۲۶

Surely Allah is not ashamed to set forth any parable - that of a gnat or anything above . . . that

Disbelief, like belief, has various degrees and ranks; and its effects also vary, like .those of belief

Tradition

(الكفر Az-Zubayri says that he said to as-Sadiq (a.s.): "Tell me how many ways ofal-kufr disbelief, infidelity, to cover) are there according to the Book of Allah? Mighty and = Great is He! He (the Imam) said: `Disbelief, according to the Book of Allah, is of five types. There is the disbelief of denial (and denial is of two kinds), and the disbelief by .neglecting what Allah has ordered, and the disbelief of disavowal, and the ingratitude

:As for the disbelief of denial, it is denial of the Lordship; it is the talk of those who say

there is no Lord (i.e. Creator), nor any Garden nor Fire". It is the word of two groups" :of disbelievers who are called atheists. And they are those who say

.(Nothing destroys us but time" (۴۵:۲۴"

It is a religion invented by them as it seemed good to them, but they have no proof to support their view. That is why Allah has said (about them): And they have no knowledge of that; they only conjecture (ibid.) that it is in reality as they say. And He :also said

Surely those who disbelieve, alike is it to them whether you warn them or do not warn (them, they will not believe.' "(al-Kafi

And as for the second kind, it is the denial after knowing; it means that the denier denies (the existence of God), but he knows (very well) that He is the truth, and he is .(convinced of it (in his heart

:(And Allah has said (about such people

And they denied them unjustly and proudly while their soul had been convinced of ;(them (۲۷:۱۴

and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved, but . . . when there came to them that which they did recognize (i.e. the Prophet) they dis... .(believed in him; so Allah's curse is on the unbelievers (۲:۸۹

.So this is the explanation of the two kinds of denial

And the third way of disbelief is ingratitude to the bounties (of Allah); and it is as Allah :says quoting (the Prophet) Sulayman

This is of the grace of my Lord that"

He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful; and whoever is grateful, he is grateful only for his own self, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely my Lord is Self-sufficient, Honoured " (۲۷:۴۰);

If you are grateful, I would certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe (۱۴:۷).

Therefore remember Me, I will remember you, and be thankful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me (۲:۱۵۲).

In all these verses Allah has used the word al-kufr = disbelief, to denote) ungratefulness, and ingratitude.)

And the fourth way of disbelief is leaving out or neglecting what Allah has ordered to do. It is as Allah says:

And when We made a covenant with you: You shall not shed your blood and you shall not turn your people out of your cities; then you gave a promise while you witnessed. Yet you it is who slay your people and turn a party from among you out of their homes, backing each other up against them unlawfully and exceeding the limits; and if they should come to you as captives, you would ransom them - while their very turning out was unlawful for you. Do you then believe in a part of the book and disbelieve in the other? (۲:۸۴-۸۵).

In this verse Allah has charged them with disbelief because they did not follow the commandment of Allah; (it should be noted that) Allah has (in this very verse) linked them to belief, yet He did not accept it

.from them and it did not benefit them before Allah

:So Allah (further) said

What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world, and on the day of resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous (.chastisement, and Allah is not at all heedless of what you do(ibid

(.And the fifth way of disbelief is disavowal. It is as Allah says, quoting Ibrahim (a.s

we renounce you, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and you for . . ." ,(ever until you believe in Allah alone" (۶۰:۴

.that is, we disavow and repudiate you

And He says, describing Iblīs and his disowning his friends from mankind on the Day of :Resurrection

.(surely I disbelieved in your associating me (with Allah) before" (۱۴:۲۲ . . ."

:And also He says

And he said: "You have only taken for yourselves idols besides Allah by way of friendship between you in the world's life, then on the resurrection day some of you ,(shall deny others, and some of you shall curse others . . . (۲۹:۲۵

.that is, some of you shall dissociate from others

The author says: This tradition confirms what we have previously mentioned that .disbelief has many grades and ranks

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۸-۲۰

point

(۸) وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَمَا هُم بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

(۹) يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلاَّ أَنفُسَهُم وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

(١٠) فِى قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللّهُ مَرَضاً وَلَهُم عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

(١١) وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لاَ تُفْسِدُواْ فِى الأَرْضِ قَالُواْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ

(١٢)

p: ١٠٣

أَلا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

(١٣) وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُواْ كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُواْ أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاء أَلا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاء وَلَكِن لاَّ يَعْلَمُونَ

(١٤) وَإِذَا لَقُواْ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ قَالُواْ آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَى شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُواْ إِنَّا مَعَكْمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِؤُونَ

(١٥) اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

(١٦) أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوُاْ الضَّلالَةَ بِالْهُدَى فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُواْ مُهْتَدِينَ

(١٧) مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لاَّ يُبْصِرُونَ

(١٨) صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لاَ يَرْجِعُونَ

(١٩) أَوْ كَصَيِّبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاء فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصْابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِم مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ واللّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكافِرِينَ

(٢٠) يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاء لَهُم مَّشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُواْ وَلَوْ شَاء اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّه عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

And there are some people who say: “We believe in Allah and in the last day”; while they are not at all believers (٨).

They desire to deceive Allah and those who believe, and they do not deceive except themselves and they do not perceive (٩).

There is a disease in their hearts, so Allah added to their disease and for them is a painful chastisement because of the lie they were saying (١٠).

And when it is said to them, “Do not make mischief in the land”, they say: “We are but peace-makers” (١١).

Now surely they themselves are the mischief-makers, but they do not perceive (١٢).

And when it is said to them: “Believe as the people have believed ”, they say: “Shall we believe as the

fools have believed?" Now surely they themselves are the fools, but they do not know .((۱۳

And when they meet those who believe, they say: "We believe "; and when they are .(alone with their Satans, they say: "Surely we are with you, we were only mocking" (۱۴

Allah pays them back their mockery, and leaves them alone in their rebellion blindly .(wandering on (۱۵

These are they who buy error for the guidance, so their bargain brings (them) no gain, .(nor are they guided aright (۱۶

Their parable is like the parable of one who kindled afire, but when it had illumined all around him, Allah took away their light, and left them in utter darkness - they do not .(see (۱۷

.(Deaf, dumb (and) blind, so they will not turn back (۱۸

Or like an abundant rain from the heaven in which is utter darkness and thunder and lightning; they put their fingers into their ears because of the thunder peals, for fear .(of death, and Allah encompasses the unbelievers (۱۹

The lightning almost takes away their sight; whenever it shines on them they walk in it, and when it becomes dark to them they stand still; and if Allah had pleased He would certainly have taken away their hearing and their sight; surely Allah has power . (over all things (۲۰

Commentary

These thirteen verses are about the hypocrites. We shall discuss this subject in detail .in Chapter ۶۳ (The Hypocrites) and in some other places

.is deceit, duplicity (الْخُدعه) "Qur'an: They desire to deceive: "al-Khad'ah

Qur'an: When

means evil, wicked; that is why (الشيطان) "they are alone with their Satans: "ash-Shaytan .the Iblīs is called the Satan

Qur'an: Their parable is like the parable of one who kindled a fire . . . they will not return: The hypocrites are like a man who is surrounded by a blinding darkness in which he cannot distinguish good from bad, beneficial from harmful; to remove it he kindles a fire, and in its light is able to see to some distance around it; then as soon as it has illumined all around, Allah, extinguishes it by wind, rain or some other thing like it .and he is left as he was before - in utter darkness

And now he is pressed between two darknesses - that of the night and that of bewilderment and nullity of his endeavour. This parable fits exactly on hypocrites. A hypocrite declares himself to be a Muslim, and through it gains some benefits, as he is .treated as a Muslim in matters of marriage and inheritance etc

But as soon as death approaches - the time when the real and complete benefits of Islam should have appeared - Allah takes away the light, nullifies his deeds and leaves him in utter darkness in which he cannot see at all. Thus he falls between two .darknesses - his original one and the one he added with his dark deeds

= (الصَّيِّب) "Qur'an: Or like an abundant rain . . . Allah has power over all things: "as-Sayyib ;(abundant rain

thunder that is heard = الرَّعـد) "lightning; flesh of lightning); "ad-ra'd = الـبرق) "al- barq"
.(thunderbolt, to strike with lightning =الصّاعِقه) " after lightning); "as-sa `iqah

This is another example for the hypocrites. A man is caught in a rain pour; darkness surrounds him, he is unable to see around and loses his bearings. The rain tells him to run away; to find a shelter somewhere, but darkness prevents him from it; frightening thunder and lightning-bolts have overwhelmed him, yet when lightning appears he tries to take its advantage by walking ahead in its light - but it appears only for a fleeting moment and then disappears; whenever it shines he walks ahead .and when darkness I engulfs him again he stops

A hypocrite is exactly in the same position. He does not like Islam, but has to profess to be a Muslim. His words do not reach his heart; what he says is different from what he believes in his heart. Because of this discrepancy his path is not illuminated as it .should have been

The result is that he gropes about aimlessly and stumbles every now and then; he walks a little and then stops. Thus Allah punishes him with disgrace; and had He wished so, He would have taken away his sight and hearing, thereby disgracing him .on the very first day

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۲۱-۲۵

point

(۲۱) يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُواْ رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

(۲۲) الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الأَرْضَ فِرَاشاً وَالسَّمَاء بِنَاء وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاء مَاء فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ

مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلاَ تَجْعَلُواْ لِلَّهِ أَندَادًا وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

(۲۳) وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَى عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُواْ بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُواْ شُهَدَاءَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

(۲۴) فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُواْ وَلَن تَفْعَلُواْ فَاتَّقُواْ النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

(۲۵) وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِين آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُواْ مِنْهَا مِن ثَمَرَةٍ رِّزْقًا قَالُواْ هَـذَا الَّذِي
رُزِقْنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَأُتُواْ بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

O men! worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you may ; (guard (against evil) (۲۱

Who made the earth a bed (resting place) and the sky a structure; and (Who) sends down rain from the heaven, thereby brings forth with it subsistence for you of the .(fruits; therefore do not set up equals to Allah while you know (۲۲

And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful .((۲۳

But if you do (it) not - and never shall you do (it) - thenbe on guard against the fire of . (which men and stones are the fuel; it is prepared for the unbelievers (۲۴

And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds that for them are gardens in which rivers flow; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit -;thereof, they shall say: “This is what was given to us before

and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them; and in .(them they shall abide (٢٥

Commentary

Qur'an: O men! worship your Lord . . . may guard (against evil): The preceding nineteen verses have described the positions of the three groups category-wise: The pious ones who are on the guidance from their Lord; the disbelievers whose hearts and ears have been sealed and who have their eyes covered; and the hypocrites in whose hearts there is disease so Allah added to their disease and they are deaf, dumb and .blind

In this background, Allah calls the men to be His good servants, to worship Him and to join, not the disbelievers and the hypocrites, but the pious ones, those who guard themselves against evil. This context shows that the clause, "so that you may guard (against evil)", is governed by the verb "worship" - you should worship Allah to join those who guard against evil, who are pious. It may also be governed by the verb, ."created" - Allah created you in order that you may guard yourselves against evil

Qur'an: Who made the earth a bed . . . do not set up equals to Allah while you know: alike, equal, peer). The phrase, "while you = النِّد) is plural of an-nidd (الأنداد) ""al-Andad know", is unconditional, and grammatically it is circumstantial phrase of "do not set up"; these two factors lend extra-ordinary force to the prohibition of setting up equals .to Allah

The sentence

shows that a man who has even a little knowledge should not ascribe any equal or partner to Allah; he should know that it is Allah Who has created him and those before him and arranged and managed this system in the creation for their sustenance and .survival

Qur’an: And if you are in doubt . . . then produce a chapter like it . . . : It is a challenge which human beings and jinn can never meet. This challenge has been offered to demonstrate the miracle of the Qur'an, to show that it is a Book sent down by Allah, there is no doubt in it; that it has been revealed as an everlasting miracle that will remain alive till the end of the world. This challenge has repeatedly been given in the :Qur' an

Say: “If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'an, they could not bring the like of it, even though some of them were aiders of the others” .((۱۷:۸۸

Or, do they say: “He has forged it?” Say: “Then bring ten chapters like it forged and call .(upon whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful” (۱۱:۱۳

This context shows that the pronoun “it” in “like it” refers to “that which We have revealed to Our servant”, that is, the Qur'an. It is a challenge to them to bring a like of .the Qur'an in its inimitable style and meaning

translated here as “like = من مثلِهِ) ”The word “min mithlihi

it") may also be rendered as "from like him". In that case it will be a challenge to bring .a like of the Qur'an written by someone like the Holy Prophet

This Qur'an has been brought by a person who was never taught by any teacher, who had not learnt these valuable and marvelous truths from any human being, nor had .he taken this most eloquent style from any mortal

If the disbelievers thought that such a man can write such a Book, then let them bring its like from some such illiterate man. In this light, the verse would have the same :import as the following one

Say: "If Allah had desired (otherwise) I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have taught it to you; indeed I have lived a lifetime among you before it; do you not (then understand?" (۱۰:۱۶

.Both explanations have been given in some Tradition

Obviously, this and the other challenging verses dare the antagonists to bring, if they can, like of even the shortest chapter of the Qur'an - say, the Chapter of al-Kawthar .or al- Asr

A strange exegesis has been written by someone that "like it " means like this Chapter, The Cow, in which this verse occurs. This explanation is totally devoid of good literary taste. Those who disbelieved in the Qur'an, rejected the whole Book as .being forged against Allah

What purpose could be served by challenging them to bring a Chapter like that of The Cow? Such a challenge would, in final

analysis, mean this: If you are in doubt the short Chapter of al-Kawthar or al- Ikhlds, then bring a like of the largest Chapter of The Cow. Absurd, isn't it!

Miracle And Its Quiddity

The claim of the Qur'an that it is a miraculous sign, and the challenge to the doubters offered by this verse, contains in reality two claims: First, that miracles, super-natural events, do occur; second, that the Qur'an is one of such miracles.

If the second claim is proved, the first will automatically be proved. That is why the Qur'an has challenged the men to bring its like, as it would prove both aspects of the claim.

How does a miracle happen? After all, it is against the deep-rooted system of the cause-and-effect which is never negated. The Qur'an explains this subject in the following two stages:

First: The miracle is a reality; the Qur'an is one of the miracles, which in itself proves the existence of miracles in general; it offers a challenge to its adversaries and in this way proves its truth.

Second: What is the reality of miracle? How can a thing happen in this world of nature against the universal law of the cause-and-effect?

The Miracle Of The Qur'an

Undoubtedly, the Qur'an has offered a continuing challenge, by which it proves itself to be a miracle. This challenge has been given in many verses of Meccan as well as Medinite period. All of them show that this Book is a divine miracle, a super-natural sign.

The verse under discussion, “And if you are in doubt as to that which

We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it . . . ”, is one of those .challenges: Produce a chapter like one of the Qur'an from someone like the Prophet

It should be noted that it does not purport to prove the prophethood of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) directly; it does not say, `if you are in doubt as to the prophethood of Our, servant'; instead it says, `if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our .'servant

Likewise, all the challenges given in the Qur'an aim to prove that this Book is a super-natural sign from Allah. And when this fact is established, the prophethood of the .Prophet will automatically be proved

The verses of challenge vary in their scope and generality. The most general is the :verse

Say: ` If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'an, they could not bring the like of it, even though some of them were aiders of the others” .((۱۷:۸۸

The verse is of Meccan period, and it is easy to see that it contains an all-encompassing challenge.

This challenge is not confined to its unsurpassed eloquence and purest style. Otherwise, the challenge would not cover non-Arabs; it could be addressed to only those who spoke pure Arabic before it was debased by foreign influence - in other words, only to the Arabs of the days of paganism or to those whose life-span bridged the time of paganism and that of Islam. But the verse

.challenges not only the whole mankind but confronts the jinn also

As for other special qualities of the Qur'an (like the exposition of spiritual realities, the high morals, the most comprehensive and the fairest legal code, the information of the things unseen as well as other subjects which the man had not even thought of when the Qur'an was revealed), they are of such a nature that only a selected group - and not the whole mankind - may appreciate them.

But the challenge is general and covers elites and common men and jinn. It is clear in this light that it is not confined to any one quality; it defies them to bring a like of this Book in all its qualities together.

The Qur'an is a miracle: For a man of eloquence, in its spellbinding sublimity and style; for a sage, in its sagacity; for a scholar, in its knowledge; for a sociologist, in its social system; for a legislator, in its legislation; for a politician, in its politics; for a ruler, in its rule of justice; and for the whole world, in such things which none of them can grasp like the information of the unseen, prophecies of future events, freedom from discrepancy in its laws, knowledge and expression.

The Qur'an claims to be a comprehensive miracle, covering all its aspects. It is a miracle for every individual man and jinn -an average person or a select one, learned or ignorant, man or woman, of a very high rank of excellence

or of a lower level -in short, anyone who has enough intelligence to understand the .Qur'anic speech

Man, by nature, comprehends a virtue and understands its various grades. Every person should look into an excellence which he or someone else has got; then he should compare that excellence or virtue with what the Qur'an contains of the same; and then he should decide - in all honestly and justice - whether it is in human power to bring a like of the Qur'an. Is it possible for a man to bring such divine knowledge, so ?well-reasoned, as the Qur'an has done

Is it within human power to build such character, based on foundation of reality, which may honestly be compared with the Qur'anic teaching in purity and excellence? Can human beings legislate perfect laws covering all human activities without blundering into discrepancies, with the spirit of monotheism and the word of piety permeating every order and its every implication, with purity and cleanliness feeding its root and ?shoots

Can such astonishing comprehensiveness and all-inclusiveness come from an untaught man? A man who was born and brought up among a people whose only share in human virtues was a life sustained with raids, plunders and wars; they buried their daughters alive, and killed their children for fear of poverty; they boasted of their fathers and married their mothers; debauchery was their pride; they condemned knowledge and showed off their ignorance; in spite of their haughtiness and chauvinism, they were preyed upon by every hunter

and were easy targets for anyone who wished to conquer them - one day they were under the Yemenite rule, the next day were ruled over by the Ethiopians; some day Byzantine emperors lorded over them, the other day it was Persia's turn to humiliate them. This is the picture, in miniature, of the Arabs before Islam. And in such .environment, the Qur'an was brought by the Prophet of Islam

Again, suppose a man brings a book, claiming that it is a guidance for the worlds. Will he dare to include in it the news and informations of the unseen - both past and future - not in one or two places but spread over a lot of topics - in stories, in prophecies, and about the events that are to happen in future? And what will be your judgment if not a ?single detail proves wrong

Once again, man is a part of this natural world; this world is constantly changing and developing from perfection to perfection. Is it possible for a man to talk about each - and every affair of human life; to give the world knowledge, laws, wisdom, admonition, parables, stories - concerning every matter, big or small - without ?committing any discrepancy, without showing any trace of gradual development

And especially so, if his talks are not delivered all at one time, are delivered piecemeal in a long period of twenty-three years? And even more so when some topics are repeated again and again, when there are shoots sprouting

from a previously planted root? Undoubtedly, it is not possible, because no man can .remain unchanged in his knowledge and outlook throughout his life

When a man ponders over these facts about the Qur'an -containing the above-mentioned distinctions besides many more - he can entertain no doubt whatsoever about its divine origin; he will feel sure that it is beyond human power, over and above .the natural and material causes

If someone is not in a position to understand this clear fact, he should follow the dictate of his nature - in other words, he should ask those who are knowledgeable .about this subject

Question: Why did not the Qur'an confine its challenge to the elite only? What is the use of including general public in this call? After all, a common man is easily-influenced by such claims and it takes him no time to accept pretensions of every .pretender

Don't you see that it was this group that surrendered to al-Bab, al-Baha', Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyanī and al- Musaylamah, even though what those deceivers brought as their proof was more like a senseless jabber and raving delirium than a ?sensible talk

Reply: It was the only way to keep the miracle all-inclusive; the only possible method for discerning the perfection and excellence in a quality that has various ranks and grades. People have different grades of understanding; likewise, the virtues differ in .their perfection

Those who have high level of understanding and correct perception will easily .appreciate the high quality of an excellent work

Those who have a lower understanding should refer to the former for their .judgement. It is the dictate of nature and demand of human psyche

A miracle that can be universal and comprehensive, that can be addressed to every individual, in every place and at all times, that can be conveyed to all and can remain alive to the last day of the world, must necessarily be a set of divine knowledge and .spiritual realities

All other miracles were either material objects or a tangible event that were governed .by the laws of nature inasmuch as they were confined to a certain time and space

They were seen by only a limited number of people; even supposing, for the sake of argument, that it was observed by all people of that particular place, it could not be witnessed by people of other localities; and suppose that an impossible happened, that is, it was seen by the whole world, it could not continue eternally for the future .generations to observe

It was for this reason that Allah chose this academic and spiritual miracle, that is, the Qur'an, for the Prophet of Islam, so that it may continue its challenge to the whole mankind -in all places and in all generations. And thus the miracle continues in its .generality, defying every person, in every area and every era

First Specific Challenge: The Knowledge It Contains

Now we come to its specific challenges. It has offered particular challenge concerning :the knowledge it imparts arid cognition it contains. Allah says

and We have revealed . . .

;(the Book to you explaining clearly everything (۱۶:۸۹

.(nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a clear book (۶:۵۹ . . .

There are many other verses of the same theme. Look at the fundamental teachings given in the text of the Qur'an; then see its details for which it has referred the people :to the Prophet – as Allah says

and whatever the Apostle gives you, take it, and from whatever he forbids you, . . . ;(keep back . . . (۵۹:۷

that you may judge between people by means of that which Allah has taught you . . . .((۴:۱۰۵

Then you will know that Islam has put its attention to all big and small topics relevant to divine knowledge, moral virtues and religious laws – covering worship, mutual dealings, social regulations, penal code, and, in short, everything that affects life and .character

All this is based on the foundation of human nature and monotheism. Analyze the details and you will find monotheism as their basis; combine the basis with relevant .principles and you will get the details

Then it has declared that all this knowledge will remain valid to the end of the world; will continue to guide mankind and will always be relevant to human needs and :environment. Allah says

and most surely it is a Mighty Book: Falsehood shall not come to it from before it . . . .(nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One (۴۱:۴۱-۴۲

Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We

.(will most surely be its guardian (١٥:٩

In other words, it is a Book which is beyond the reach of the law of change and .development; it will never be disturbed by abrogation

A question may be asked here: The sociologists are of the opinion that the laws and regulations controlling the society must change according to the changes occurring in the structure of society. As the time passes and civilization marches ahead, it .becomes necessary to change the laws to cope with the changed situation

Then how can the sharī`ah of Islam continue without any change or abrogation all :these centuries? We shall explain this matter, God willing, under the verse

.(Mankind was but one people . . . (٢:٢١٣

Here it is enough to point out that the Qur'an has built its laws on the foundation of monotheism and excellent ethics that spring from healthy human nature; it declares .that legislation must grow up from the seed of creation and existence

The scholars of sociology, on the other hand, have fixed their eyes on changes of society, totally ignoring the spiritual side of monotheism and morality. As a result, their word concentrates on material development of the society – and society is not a living .organism, it does not have a soul; and the word of Allah is the highest

Second Specific Challenge: The Recipient Of The Revelation

Another aspect of this challenge is the personality of the untaught Prophet who brought this Qur'an as a miracle in its words and in its meanings. He had not learnt from any teacher, was not

.trained by any instructor

:This challenge is contained in the following words of Allah

Say: “If Allah had desired (otherwise) I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have taught it to you; indeed I have lived a lifetime among you before it; do you not .(then understand?” (۱۰:۱۶

The Prophet lived among them as one of them. In all those years, he had not risen above them in scholarship, nor was he renowned for any knowledge. He did not deliver any lecture, nor did he compose a single line of poetry, up to his fortieth year - that is to say, for about two-thirds of his total life-span; he did not get any distinction .in literature or scholarship all these years

Then, all of a sudden, he brought what he said was the revelation from God, before which giants of literature felt like pigmies, and eloquent speakers became tongue-tied. He published that revelation to the furthest limits of the world, but no one dared .to bring its like in all these centuries

The outmost that his adversaries could say was that he must have learnt those stories from Christian monks during his trade-journeys to Syria. But he had gone to Syria only twice: First, in his early childhood, with his uncle, Abū Talib and then, at the age of twenty-five, with Maysarah, the slave of Khadījah. In both these journeys he was never alone day or night, and nobody ever reported any such meeting with any .supposed teacher

Even if we accept

for the sake of argument that such training session did take place, many questions will arise from it: Who taught him this divine knowledge of monotheism? Where did he get these wise rules and these realities? And lastly, who gave him this unsurpassed elocution which has kept the silver-tongued elocutionists dumbfounded all these ?years

Another suggestion was that he learned these sublime truths from a blacksmith, of :Roman origin, who made and sold swords. Allah replied to this allegation in this verse

And certainly We know that they say: "Only a mortal teaches him ". The tongue of him whom they are inclined to blame for it is barbarous, and this is clear Arabic language .((۱۶:۱۰۳

A third accusation was that he gained this knowledge from Salman, the Persian, who allegedly knew all about various religions and sects. But Salman met the Prophet in Medina and thereafter accepted Islam, while the major portion of the Qur'an was re-vealed at Mecca, and that part contained all the principles, knowledge and stories that were later repeated at Medina - we may say that Meccan revelation had more of these thing, than the verses revealed at Medina. The question is: What knowledge did .Salman add after his conversion to Islam? Nothing

Moreover, read the Old and the New Testaments, and compare the stories of the previous prophets and their people written in them with those revealed in the Qur'an. You will see that the latter's history and stories are different from the former's. The Bible attributes such

sins and evils to the prophets of Allah which one would be loth to ascribe to an .average man of good character

But the Qur'an absolves them from such blames. Then you will find in the Bible many topics that have no bearing on, and relevance to, the spiritual knowledge or moral excellence. The Qur'an never talks except about that which is truly beneficial to .people in their spiritual upliftment and character-building

Third Specific Challenge: Its Prophecies And Information Of Unseen

The Qur'an's third specific challenge is concerning its prophecies and the information :it gives of the unseen. Such verses may be divided in four categories

١. The information about previous prophets and their nations: Allah says about some :of these stories

These are of the tidings of the unseen which We revealed to you; you did not know ;(them - (neither) you nor your people - before this. . . (١١:۴٩

:and He says after the story of Yūsuf

This is of the tidings of the unseen (which) We revealed to you, and you were not with ;(them when they resolved upon their affair, and they were devising plans (١٢ :١٠٢

:also, about the story of Maryam

This is of the tidings of the unseen which We reveal to you; and you were not with them when they cast their pens (to decide) which of them should have Maryam in his ;(charge, and you were not with them when they contended one with another (٣:۴۴

:and about `Isa

Such is 'Isa, son of Maryam; (this is) the saying of truth about which they dispute .((١٩:٣۴

There are many verses

.of the same import

:Prophecies of future events: For example: The Romans would avenge their defeat .۲

The Romans are vanquished, in a near land; and they, after being vanquished, shall overcome within a few years (۳۰:۲-۴);

:the Prophet would return to Mecca after his hijrah

Most surely He Who has made the Qur'an binding on you will bring you back to the destination (۲۸ :۸۵);

:the vision of the Prophet would certainly come true

Certainly Allah had shown to His Apostle the vision with truth: You shall most certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah pleases, in security, (some) having their heads shaved and (others) having their haircut, you shall not fear (۴۸:۲۷);

:the behaviour, in future, of a group of Muslims

Those who are left behind will say when you set forth for the gaining of acquisition: Allow us (that) we may follow you. They desire to change the words of Allah (۴۸:۱۵);

:nobody would be able to harm the Prophet

. . . and Allah will protect you form the men (۵:۷۰);

:the Qur'an will remain under the protection of Allah

.(Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian (۱۵:۹

We may include in this category other numerous verses giving good tidings to the believers and threatening the disbelievers and pagans of Mecca of various .retributions

In this category come the prophecies of the signs and disturbances appearing soon :before the Day of Judgement. For example

And it is forbidden to a town which We destroyed that they shall not return, until when Gog and Magog

are let loose and they shall hasten forth from every elevated place. And the true promise shall draw nigh, then lo! the eyes of those who disbelieved shall be fixedly open: O woe to us! surely we were in heedlessness as to this; nay, we were unjust .(ones (۲۱:۹۵-۹۷

Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them successors in the earth as He made successors those before .(them . . . (۲۴:۵۵

Say: `He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement from above you or from beneath your feet, or that He should throw you into confusion, (making you) .(of different parties; and make some of you taste the fighting of to others . .. . (۶:۶۵

۳. The verses based on such scientific realities which were unknown, and even unthought of, when the Qur'an was revealed, and which have just now been :discovered after long researches

;(And We send the winds fertilizing (۱۵:۲۲

And the earth - We have spread it forth and put in it anchors (i.e. mountains) and ;(caused to grow in it of everything, weighed(۱۵:۱۹

Have We not made the earth a resting place, and the mountains as pegs (therein)? .((۷۸:۶ - ۷

۴. The verses that allude to many great events and disorders that were to happen in the Islamic community, or the world in general, after the lifetime of the Prophet. For :example

O you who believe! whoever of you turns back from his religion, then

soon Allah will bring a people that He shall love them and they shall love Him, humbled before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in Allah's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer; this is Allah's grace, He gives it to whom He pleases (۵:۵۴);

And every nation had an apostle; so when their apostle came, the matter was decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. And they say: "When will this threat come about, if you are truthful?" Say; "I do not control for myself any harm, or any benefit, except what Allah pleases; every nation has a term; when their term comes, they shall not then remain behind for an hour, nor can they go before (their time)". Say: "Tell me if His punishment overtakes you by night or by day! What then is there of it that the guilty would hasten on?" (۱۰:۴۷-۵۰);

Then set your face uprightly for the (right)religion in natural devotion (to the truth), the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; . . . and be not of the polytheists, of those who divided their religion and became sects; every sect rejoicing in what they had with them (۳۰:۳۰-۳۲).

There are many verses that come into this category, and we shall describe some of them when explaining the seventeenth chapter (The Night-journey). It should be noted here that this category is one of the specialties of this book of

.ours

Fourth Specific Challenge: No Discrepancies In The Qur'an

:It is one of the challenges of the Qur'an that there is no discrepancy in it. Allah says

Do they not then meditate on the Qur'an? And if it were from any other than Allah, .(they would have found in it many a discrepancy (۴:۸۲

This is a material world, governed by the law of change and development. Every item in this world changes day after day from weakness to strength, from deficiency to perfection -in its own self as well as in all its concomitants and attachments. Man is no .exception to this rule

He also undergoes constant change and development in his existence as well as in effects of his actions and reactions. And this law applies also to what he gets through his perception and intellect. Every man finds that his today is a bit more perfect than .his yesterday

Every passing hour makes him realize what mistakes he had committed in the past hour, what erroneous views he had held a few hours back. It is a fact that no sane .person can deny

In this background, look at the Qur'an. Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) brought this book piece by piece, one small chapter or a few verses at a time. It continued for twenty-three :years in different places, various conditions and divergent situations

In Mecca and Medina, by day and by night, during journeys and at home, in thick of battle and in time of peace, during hard up days and in easy times, when Muslims ,suffered defeat and when they were victorious

.in safety and in danger

It contained all types of subjects - it unveiled spiritual knowledge, taught excellent ethics and ordained laws for every conceivable aspect of life. In spite of all these factors, there is not a whiff of discrepancy in its matter or meaning - it is an oft-repeated book whose parts resemble one with the other.

There is not a least difference, contradiction or contrariety in the realities it has explained, in the principles it has laid down. One verse explains the rest, one sentence clarifies the others, as 'Alī (a.s.) said: "Its one part speaks with the other, and one portion testifies about the others."

No doubt, if such a book would have been from other than Allah, there would have been a lot of ups and downs in its style; the speech would have bounced between elegance and clumsiness; the themes would have ranged from correct to erroneous. In short, the book would have been uneven, unbalanced and full of discrepancies.

Question: This is a claim without any proof. Non-Muslim scholars have written many books showing that the Qur'an suffers from many discrepancies and mistakes - in construction of sentences (which fall short of the standard of eloquence) as well as in themes and meanings (which contain errors in its views and teachings).

The replies given by the Muslims are just piteous attempts to explain away those contradictions and shortcomings. Those are defects that a correct and good speech should not have had in the first place.

Reply: The so-called discrepancies

and defects have not been discovered by our adversaries; they have been mentioned (together with their replies) by Muslims in their books of exegesis and other subjects related to the Qur'an (not excepting this book of ours); the Muslim authors have used this method to show that what looks at the first glance an unusual style or expression .is in fact a gem of highest eloquence

The non-Muslim writers have just picked out those supposed defects and discrepancies and collected them in their books, ignoring the replies that showed the real beauty of those expressions. If eye of love is blind, the eye of enmity is not any .brighter

Question: Well, how can you explain away the difficulty that arises out of abrogation? :Many Qur'anic verses have been abrogated, as the Qur'an itself says

Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or ; (like it (۲:۱۰۶

And when We change (one)communication for (another) communication, and Allah .(knows best what He reveals . . . (۱۶:۱۰۱

Abrogation is at least a change of opinion, an inconsistency of thought, if not an .outright contradiction in speech

Reply: Abrogation is neither a contradiction in speech nor a change of opinion or thought. A rule is abrogated when the society, the environment, changes in such a way that the underlying wisdom of that rule remains no longer valid. The difference, if .any, is not in the opinion; it is rather in the subject matter

A clear evidence of it may be seen in

the abrogated verses themselves – they invariably always contained some phrases or clauses to show that the given order was a temporary one, that it would soon be :abrogated. For example

And as for those who are guilty of lewdness from among your women, call to witness against them four(witnesses) from among you; then if they bear witness confine them to the houses until death takes them away or Allah makes some way for .(them(۴:۱۵

:Note the last sentence and the hint it gives. Another example

Many of the people of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after your faith . . . But pardon and forgive (them) until Allah should bring about His .(command (۲:۱۰۹

.Here too the concluding phrase shows that the rule ordained was not forever

Fifth Specific Challenge: Its Eloquence

point

The Qur'an has also challenged its adversaries to bring its like in its eloquence. Allah :says

Or, do they say: "He has forged it?" Say: "Then bring ten chapters like it forged and call upon whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful." But if they do not answer you, then know that it is revealed by Allah's knowledge and that there is no god but He; will (you then submit? (۱۱:۱۳-۱۴

:These verses were revealed at Mecca. Again Allah says

Or, do they say: "He has forged it?" Say: "Then bring a chapter like this and call whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful." Nay, they have rejected that of which they have no comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation

.(has not yet come to them (١٠:٣٨-٣٩

These are Meccan verses too. All these verses challenge the doubters and disbelievers to bring the like of ten or even one chapter of the Qur'an in its style and eloquence, as eloquence was the most accomplished art of the Arabs of those days. Undoubtedly, they had reached the highest peak of eloquence. No preceding, contemporary or following nation ever reached even near them in their mastery of .literature

Their expression was elegant, their style enchanting; their words perfectly fitted their themes and meanings; their talks were always in harmony with the occasions; their words were plain and their sentences beautiful; and their speech had an easy flow and inimitable grace. It was a way of which they were the pioneers and the only .walkers

The Qur'an challenged such a nation in every possible way, so as to excite their rage, rouse their fury and fire them with determination to meet the challenge. It should not be forgotten that they were extremely proud of their art of eloquence and never acknowledged the least elocutionary skill to anyone else. In spite of that arrogance of .theirs, the Prophet dared them to bring just one chapter like the Qur'an

It is a challenge that even now is ringing in the ears of disbelievers, defying them to forge, if they can, just one chapter like it. But the Arabs' only answer was to avoid it; the more forcefully they were challenged, the more evident their helplessness was. Ultimately, they used

.to hide themselves to avoid hearing its sound

:Allah says

Now surely they fold up their breasts that they may conceal from Him; now surely, when they put their garments as a covering, He knows what they conceal and what .(they make known (۱۱:۵

Even after fourteen centuries, no one has been able to bring its like. Those who tried it put themselves to shame and made themselves targets of ridicule. History has preserved some samples of those pathetic attempts. Musaylamah (who posed as a :(prophet) wrote these words in reply to the Qur'an ch. ۱۰۵ (The Elephant

The elephant, what is the elephant! And what will make you understand what the“ ”.elephant is? It has an unwholesome tail, and a long trunk

In another “verse”, which he recited before al-Sajah (who also claimed to be a prophetess), he said: ”. . . then we penetrate it into you women a hard penetration, ”. . .and take it out from you forcefully

Look at this rigmarole and decide its worth. A Christian in latter days wrote this :“chapter” in reply to the Chapter of The Opening

All praise is due to the Beneficent, the Lord of the beings, the King, the Subduer. For“ ”.Thee is the worship, and from Thee is the help. Guide us to the path of faith

.All attempts to meet this challenge suffered the same fate

Two Questions

First: It is unreasonable to say that a speech can reach a level where it would become a miracle, a super-natural work. Language has been made by

human ingenuity. How can a product of nature be above the reach of nature? A maker .is more powerful than the thing he makes; a cause always encompasses its effect

It is the man who invented the words to meet his social needs, to convey to others' minds what one thinks or feels. The relationship of a word with its meaning is created by man. It is a subjective quality given to the word by man. This quality cannot reach beyond the ability of the maker himself. In other words, it is impossible for a speech to .rise above the human ability

Second: Let us accept for the time being that a particular composition of a speech may reach super-natural level, may become a miracle. Every intended theme may be clothed in various sentences, each differing from the others in grades of perfection; and out of those numerous sentences one would reach a standard which would be .beyond human ability and power - and that composition would be a miracle

It means that for every intended meaning there would be one miraculous sentence; and other structures would be below that standard. But we see that the Qur'an, more often than not, repeats many themes - and especially the stories - using different compositions and dissimilar styles. Whichever sentence-structure and style is .accepted as a miracle, the other ones would fall short of that standard

Reply: Before replying to these objections one matter should be clarified here. It were such questions which led some Muslim

to turn away). They believed like = الصَّرف) scholars to believe in the theory of as-sarf other Muslims that it was impossible for men to bring a like of the whole Qur'an; or its .ten chapters, or even one chapter

But, according to them, this inability of men was not based on the fact that the Qur'anic speech in itself was beyond the human power. The real reason was that Allah, by His predominant will and decree, has turned away and dissuaded would-be adversaries from bringing its like. Allah has done so to preserve and protect the .sanctity of the prophethood

This theory was totally wrong. This explanation is not in conformity with the clear :import of the challenging verses. Allah says for example

Or, do they say: "He has forged it?" Say: "Then bring ten chapters like it forged and call upon whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful. "But if they do not answer you, then know that it is revealed by Allah's knowledge and that there is no god but He; will .(you then submit? (۱۱:۱۳-۱۴

Ponder on the sentences, "then know that it is revealed by Allah's knowledge". The challenge was meant to prove that the Qur'an was a revelation; that it was not a speech forged by the Apostle; and that it was revealed by Allah's knowledge and not :by the Satans. The same theme is found in the following verses

Or, do they say: "He has forged it." Nay! they do not believe. Then let them bring

.(a talk like it if they are truthful. (۵۲:۳۳-۳۴

And the Satans have not come down with it; and it behooves them not, and they have not the power to do (it). Most surely they are far removed from the hearing (ofit) .((۲۶:۲۱۰-۲۱۲

On the other hand, this theory of "turning away" implies that the reality of the Qur'an's miracle was not in its being a revelation from Allah; the miracle was that Allah pre… :vented the people from bringing a like of it. Again look at the verse

Or, do they say: "He has forged it?" Say: "Then bring a chapter like this and call whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful." Nay, they have rejected that of which they have no comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation has not yet come to .(them . . . (۱۰:۳۸-۳۹

This verse clearly says that what made them helpless before the Qur'an, what made it impossible for them to bring a like of even one of its chapters, was the fact that it has a final interpretation whose knowledge is reserved for Allah - a knowledge which they .lacked. It is this inherent quality of the Qur'an which vanquished the adversaries

It was not that they had ability to bring its like but Allah prevented them from doing so. :Then, there is the verse

Do they not then meditate on the Qur'an? And if it were from any other than Allah, .(they would have found in it many a discrepancy (۴:۸۲

It shows that the miracle is

in the inherent quality of the Qur'an that it was free from discrepancy in its words and meanings - because it is a quality which is not within the power of any creature - not that there was some discrepancy in this Book, but Allah prevented people from finding .it out

All these Qur'anic declarations prove that the theory of as-sarf has no leg to stand, .and one should not take it seriously

Now we come to the objections mentioned earlier. It is a fallacious argument that as the language is a product of human ingenuity, it can never reach a level which would be beyond the grasp or ability of human beings; language, being a product, cannot be more powerful than its producer. The fallacy lies in the fact that what has been .invented by man is simple words for particular meanings

But this congruity of the words with their meanings does not teach the man how to arrange those words, how to plan, draft and deliver a talk in the best possible way - in a way that the talk reflects the beauty of the meaning as it is in the mind, and the meaning in its turn becomes a mirror of the reality, remains in complete agreement .with the fact

It requires dexterity in the art of eloquence, adroitness in elocution; also it depends on sharp intelligence and comprehensive knowledge so that the speaker may be fully cognizant of all aspects of the subject matter. It is this skill and knowledge

that differs from man to man, and creates difference between talk and talk in their .respective perfection and beauty

So, there are three aspects of a human talk; Knowledge of language – a man may be having the most comprehensive knowledge of the words of a language, without being able to speak it; elocutionary skill – a man may be the most accomplished orator, without being cognizant of material and spiritual realities; Knowledge of realities – a man may be the most learned scientist or theologian without having the ability to .express his views and meanings intelligibly

These three factors may be found separately (as mentioned above) and may also combine together in some people. And on them depend the beauty and the eloquence .of a speech

The first factor – single words for their meanings – has been invented by social instinct of man. But the remaining two depend on intellectual refinement and delicate .discernment

Human perception, intelligence and discernment is limited and restricted. We cannot comprehend all the details of an event, all concomitants of a fact. As a result, we cannot be sure of being right at any time. Furthermore, we are gradually moving from deficiency to perfection, and so is our perception and discernment. Look at any spellbinding orator or enchanting poet; compare his earlier work with his latest and .you will see the difference

In this background, let us look at human speech – any human speech. First, we cannot be sure that it is free from errors of fact

and judgment, because, as mentioned above, no speaker can have comprehensive .knowledge of all the details and concomitants of an event

Second, it will not be on the same level with speaker's former or later speech. Not only that: Even in the same speech the beginning will surely be on a level different from that of the end, although we, probably, will not be able to discern it because of the .minuteness of difference

Now, when we find a decisive speech, based on comprehensive knowledge, and free from all types of discrepancy, we will have to admit that it is not the work of a mortal :man. This reality has been described in the following verses

Do they not then meditate on the Qur'an? And if it were from any other than Allah, ;(they would have found in it many a discrepancy (۴:۸۲

I swear) by the heaven endued with rotation, and by the earth splitting (with plants) .(etc.), most surely it is a decisive word, and it is not a jest (۸۶:۱۱-۱۴

Note the adjectives used for the heaven and the earth - they point to the constant changes occurring therein, because the oath is about a Book which is free from change and difference, inasmuch as it is based on an unchangeable and lasting reality, that is, its “interpretation”. (It is a Qur'anic terminology that will be explained in (.Ch. ۳

:Also, Allah says

; (Nay! it is a glorious Qur'an, in a guarded tablet (۸۵: ۲۱-۲۲

I swear) by the Book that makes manifest (the)

truth); surely We have made it an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand. And ;(surely it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom (۴۳:۲ -۴

But nay! (I swear) by the falling of stars; and most certainly it is a great oath if you only knew; most surely it is an honoured Qur'an, in a book that is hidden; none do .(touch it save the purified ones. A revelation by the Lord of the worlds (۵۶:۷۵ -۸۰

These and other similar verses show that the Qur'an is based on established realities that do not change, that are never altered. And, therefore, the Qur'an itself is safe .from change, alteration and discrepancy

To come back to the main objection: Accepted that language has been made by men. But it does not mean that there cannot be found a piece of literature that is beyond the reach of the very men who made the language. Otherwise, we would have to say that a sword-maker must be the bravest of all the swordsmen, the inventor of chess !or lute must be the most accomplished chess-master or lutenist

The perfect eloquence demands that, first, the word should be in complete harmony with the intended meaning, and, second, the conveyed meaning must be in ?accordance with the established fact. How the words fit the meanings

The structural sequence of the words and their parts should perfectly agree with the natural order of the intended meaning and its parts - bringing the man-made

language and sentences in total agreement with the nature. (See for details Dala'ilu ('l-ijaz of ash-Shaykh `Abdu 'l-Qahir al-Jurjanī.

As for the meaning, it must be correct and true, based on a real fact existing outside our imagination - and that fact should be of permanent value, unchangeable and un... alterable. The first quality (the agreement of the word with meaning) depends on this .basic quality of the meaning

A very eloquent sweet-sounding jocular speech cannot stand before a serious talk; nor can an eloquent, serious speech - if it is based on wrong premises - be equal to a .talk that reflects true facts and comprehensive wisdom

A speech attains the highest standard of eloquence when its words are sweet, its style free-flowing, its meaning fitting the occasion and its conveyed proposition based .on true facts

Such a talk, based as it is on reality, can never differ with other realities; can never disagree with other truths. Truth and reality is a non-divisible entity. Truth cannot .refute another truth; reality cannot oppose another reality

Lie, on the other hand, may be in opposition to another lie as it surely is against the :truth. Ponder on the verse

.(and what is there after the truth but error (۱۰:۳۲ . . .

:Note that truth is singular; there is no division in it. Again Allah says

.(and follow not (other) ways, for they will scatter you away from His ways . . . (۶:۱۵۳ . . .

.Lie has many ways, it is not only disunited but also disuniting

Obviously, there can

be no difference whatsoever between one truth and the other; instead, there shall be total union and unison between them – one truth will lead to the other, one reality will guide to the other; thus, one part of the Qur'an confirms the others, one sentence .testifies for the others

It is a wonderful quality of the Qur'an. Take any verse; it is clear in its meaning; add to it another relevant verse equally clear; and you will find them together pointing to a new reality that was not shown by either verse separately: then put them side by side .with a third relevant verse, and you will gain fresh insight into new sublime realities

It is a unique quality of the Qur'an, and you will see many examples of this special characteristic in this book. Unfortunately the exegetes had so far neglected this method. Had they followed this way since the early days, they would have discovered .by now so much of its hidden treasures

This lengthy discourse was necessary to show that the two objections laid down against the Qur'anic miracle of eloquence were baseless. Miraculous eloquence is not based on words alone. Therefore, it is out of place to say that as it is man who had ?made the language, how can any speech be above the reach of the man himself

Also, there is no room for the question that as only one out of many possible compositions can be the highest, how is it possible to express one idea

?in different ways, and then to claim that all were of miraculous standard

Our foregoing explanation has made it clear that the miracle of eloquence depends on meaning – on its agreement with sublime unchangeable reality and on its conformity .with the words

The Reality Of Miracle According To The Qur'an

point

The Qur'an repeatedly asserts the occurrence of miracle – an unusual preternatural phenomenon, which shows the authority of metaphysical forces over the physical and .material world. Miracle is not something against self-evident rational truth

Some people have tried to explain away the verses that describe various miracles; their aim was to make the Qur'an fit the principles of modern physical sciences. But such attempts are unacceptable, as they are a forced burden on the language and the .Qur'an

We are going to explain, under various headings, what the Qur'an teaches us about .the meaning and reality of miracle

The Qur'an Confirms the General Rule of the Cause–and–Effect .1

The Qur'an says that in this natural world everything, every effect, has a cause; that there is a system of cause-and-effect permeating through this world. It is a self-evident reality; and on this truth depend the scientific and academic researches and discussions. Man by nature believes that there must be a cause for every natural .phenomenon

Likewise, academic researches try to find out relevant causes for all such happenings. What is a cause? It is such a thing, or a combination of things, that whenever it occurs, .another thing – its effect – unfailingly comes into being

We try to find out by experiments the causes of various things. For example, experience has taught us that

if there is any burn, it must have been caused by fire, movement, friction or some such cause. A cause must be unfailable, comprehensive and universal. In other words, .whenever and wherever the cause is found, its effect must be found

This matter is clearly confirmed by the Qur'an. It takes this principle for granted when it talks about life, death, sustenance and other heavenly or earthly phenomena - .although it ultimately ascribes all the effects, and their causes too, to Allah

The Qur'an, therefore, confirms the general system of the cause-and-effect; whenever a cause is found (with all its necessary conditions) its effect must come into being, and whenever we see an effect, it surely and unfailingly proves the existence .of its cause

(The Qur'an Affirms Miracle (Super-Natural Events .۲

The Qur'an, nevertheless, narrates many an event that goes against the normal, natural system of the cause-and-effect. It ascribes many super-natural miracles to various prophets, like Nūh, Hūd, Salih, Ibrahīm, Lūt, Dawūd, Sulayman, Mūsa, `Isa .(!and Muhammad (peace of Allah be on them all

It should not be forgotten here that those events, although abnormal and uncus- tomary, were not inherently impossible; they were not like an assertion that `A positive proposition and its opposite are affirmed together and are negated together'; or like a statement that `A thing can be separated from its own self'; or that `One is .'not a half of two

We instinctively know that such propositions are impossible, they cannot be. But the miracles shown by the prophets were not of this category; otherwise, the minds of

untold billions of religionists, since the dawn of humanity, would not have accepted them and believed in them. No man accepts an inherently impossible statement, nor .does any sane person ascribe such a thing to another

Moreover, the effects that are called miracle, are not unknown to the nature. The natural world is continuously engaged in bestowing on the matter one form after the other, turning one event into another, giving life to the dead, and death to the living, .transforming the misfortune into fortune and the comfort into discomfort

All this is happening daily in the world of nature; the only difference between a natural event and a miraculous one is in the speed and steps required to reach the goal. A natural cause brings about its effect, in special conditions, at a particular time and .space, step by step in a long series of changes

The matter present in a walking-stick may one day appear in a running serpent; a disintegrating skeleton may one day become a living man - but in its natural course it will take a very long time, under certain conditions of time and space, with numerous consecutive causes which would constantly change that particular matter from one form to the other, taking it from one step to the next and then to the third and so on, .until it appears in the required shape and form

In normal way, it cannot happen without its proper causes, without its necessary conditions; nor can it be brought into being

by will-power of a human being. But when it comes to a miracle, it happens just by the will of the prophet, without any material cause and without any lapse of time.

Of course, it is very difficult for a simple mind - as it is for a scientific brain - to understand such super-natural events; man is, after all, accustomed to the natural-causality. On the other hand, no scientist can outright reject occurrence of super-natural phenomena even in this atomic age.

Every day someone or the other demonstrates his skill bringing some super-natural events about; people see it, radios and televisions broadcast it, newspapers and magazines publish it; and nobody says that it could not have happened as it was against the laws of nature.

Such phenomena have led many modern scholars to the theory that man, like everything else, is surrounded by unknown magnetic or electric currents; man may, through rigorous training, get control over the surrounding currents, and use them to affect other material things in abnormal and unusual ways, bringing those astonishing feats about.

If this theory is proved correct and all-inclusive, it will supersede all present theories that explain various happenings and effects in terms of motion and power; it will replace all previous causes with one all-pervasive natural cause: the magnetic currents.

This is their theory. They are right in their belief that every natural phenomenon must have a natural cause if the causal relationship between them is intact.

The Qur'an has not identified by name any all-pervasive natural cause

that would explain all natural and super-natural events, as it is not within the main purposes of this divine book. But it affirms that every natural phenomenon has a .natural cause - by permission of Allah

In other words, every phenomenon is totally dependent on Allah, Who has appointed for it a certain procedure, a natural cause through which it gets its existence -the :existence that is given by Allah. Allah says

and whoever fears Allah He will make for him an outlet, and give him sustenance from whence he thinks not; and whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him; surely Allah . (attains His purpose; Allah indeed has made a measure for everything (۶۵:۲-۳

Its first sentence unreservedly declares that whoever fears Allah and has trust in Him, Allah is sufficient for him, and He will surely manage his affairs and make him succeed, even if in the normal way it may seem impossible, even if the material :causes go against him. It is supported by the following verses

And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then verily I am very near; I answer ; (the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me (۲:۱۸۶

;(Call upon Me, I will answer you(۴۰:۶۰

.(Is not Allah sufficient for His servant? (۳۹:۳۶

The next sentence, "surely Allah attains His purpose", explains the reason of the first :declaration. The same theme is found in the verse

.(and Allah is predominant over His affair, but most people do not know (۱۲:۲۱ . . .

This sentence too is

all-inclusive and without any condition. Allah has His own way to let a thing happen, if .He so wills - even if the normal ways are closed, even if usual paths to it are cut off

This may possibly happen in two ways: First, Allah may bring that thing into being simply by His will, without resorting to any material or natural cause. Second, there may be an alternative natural cause, unknown to us, which Allah may have appointed for that phenomenon; it may be hidden from our eyes but the Maker and Creator, .Who has prescribed it, knows it and uses it to attain His purpose

This second possibility seems more appropriate in view of the last sentence, "Allah indeed has made a measure for everything." This sentence shows that every effect, whether it is in accordance with the normal causality or not, has a measure appointed by Allah, is related to other beings, has a connection with other things; Allah may bring that effect into existence through any other related thing, even if the normal cause is .absent

What should not be forgotten is the basic fact that it is Allah Who has bestowed .causality on a cause; this relation of cause and effect is not independent of Allah

Allah has created causal relation between various things. He can attain His purpose through any way He wishes. No doubt, there is the system of cause-and-effect in the world; but this chain is in the hands of Allah, He may use it in

.any way He wills

There is a real causal relation between a thing and the things that have preceded it; but that reality is not as we know it – that is why no academic or scientific theory is capable of explaining all phenomena of the world; it is really as Allah knows, makes .and manages it

:"This basic principle has been referred to in the verses of "decree" or "measure

And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down .(but in a known measure (۱۵:۲۱

;(Surely We have created every thing according to a measure (۵۴:۴۹

.(and Who created every thing, then ordain for it a measure (۲۵:۲ . . .

Who created then made complete, and Who made (things) according to a measure . (then guided (them to their goal) (۸۷:۲ - ۳

:Look also at the following verses

No misfortune befalls on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We .(bring it into existence (۵۷:۲۲

No affliction comes about but by Allah's permission; and whoever believes in Allah, He .(guides aright his heart; and Allah is Cognizant of all things (۶۴:۱۱

These verses (and especially the first) show that the things take their particular identity in accordance with a measure appointed for it by Allah; that measure gives it its individuality and defines it; and that measure and definition precedes the thing and then accompanies it. A thing can be properly delineated only if it is seen in

.its perspective, clearly defining its relation to all other things

The other related things serve as a mould that gives this item its peculiar shape and particular form. Every material effect is connected with all things which precede or accompany it. All such things together serve as the cause of this effect; and this one in .its turn becomes a part of the cause of other effects that come later

:Also, it may be proved from the following two verses

; (That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of every thing. . . (۴۰:۶۲

there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock; surely my Lord is on the . . . .(straight path(۱۱:۵۶

Add to them the fact that the Qur'an confirms the general system of causality -and .you will find the complete picture displayed before your eyes

The first verse says that every thing is created by Allah, and the second one states .۱ that creation is on a single pattern; there is no deviation in it as that would cause .chaos and disturbance

.The Qur'an confirms the general system of causality for all material things .۲

It follows that every material thing and effect is invariably always created by a .۳ cause - a cause that precedes it and brings it into being. It makes no difference whether it is a normal and usual cause, or a supernatural one. There must always be a .cause

Many usual causes which sometimes fail to bring about the expected effects are not .۴ .the real causes

The real causes are those which never fail to create the expected effects. An example may be given of various diseases and their causes; influenza was previously thought to be caused by cold; but cold did not always create it, now it has been discovered .that it is caused by a virus. The same is true about many supernatural feats

Whatever is Caused by Natural Causes is Really Caused by Allah .۳

The Qur'an, while affirming the causal relation between a cause and its effect, ascribes every effect to Allah. The inference is that these normal and usual causes are not independent in creating their effects; the real cause, in the true sense of this .word, is only Allah

:Allah says

- ;(surely His is the creation and the command (۷:۵۴
- ;(Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's (۲:۲۸۴
- ;(His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth (۵۷:۵
- .(Say: "All is from Allah" (۴:۷۸

There are numerous such verses showing that everything belongs exclusively to Allah; He may deal with it in any way He likes; no one else can handle it at all except by permission of Allah; He allows whomsoever He wishes to manage, influence and effect it to a certain extent. But this divine permission, establishing the relation of causality, does not make that cause independent of Allah; it is just a permission given .by the real owner to use his property

The man having this permission cannot transgress the limits imposed by the owner. :Allah says

- Say: "O Allah, Master of kingdom! Thou givest the

kingdom to whomsoever thou pleasest and takest away the kingdom from whomsoever Thou pleasest (۳:۲۶);

• (Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal) (۲:۵۰);

• . . . whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? (۲:۲۵۵);

• . . . and He is firmly established on Arsh, regulating the affair; there is no intercessor except after His permission (۱۰:۳).

The causes do have the causality because Allah has given it to them. They have got it, but are not independent of Allah. It is this factor that has been described in above verses as "intercession" and "permission". Permission means that there was an impediment which, but for this permission would have hindered the now-authorized agent from interfering in this affair.

In short, every cause has been given the power to create the relevant effect; but the real authority is yet in the hands of Allah.

۴. The Souls of the Prophets do have Influence Over the Super-Natural Events

Allah says:

. . . and it was not meet for an apostle that he should bring a sign except with Allah's permission; but when the command of Allah came, judgement was given with truth, and those who treated (it) as a lie were lost (۴۰:۷۸).

The verse shows that it was the apostle who brought the sign - by permission of Allah. The souls of the prophets were given a special power to cause the miracle; and that causal power, like all other causes,

.created its effect with permission of Allah

:Again Allah says

And they followed what the Satans chant (of sorcery) against the kingdom of Sulayman; and not that Sulayman disbelieved, but (it was) the Satans that disbelieved, they taught men sorcery and what was sent down to the two angels at Babylon, Harut and Marut: Yet these two taught no one until they had said, "Surely we are only a trial, therefore do not be a disbeliever". Even then men learned from these two that by which they might cause a separation between a man and his wife; and .(they cannot hurt with it anyone except with Allah's permission (۲:۱۰۲

This verse proves two things: magic has some reality; and it, not unlike miracle, is .caused by a psychical factor of the magician, by permission of Allah

Take a miracle, a magic, a mysterious wonder of a saint, or a spell-bringing skill acquired through rigorous practice - all these extra-ordinary or super-natural deeds emanate from their agents' psychical factors - or will-power - as the above-.mentioned verses have shown

But Allah has made it clear that the psychical cause found in His apostles, prophets and believers is predominant, has the mastery, over all other causes, in all imaginable :conditions; it can never be overpowered. Allah says

And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles: Most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone .(shall be the victorious ones (۳۷:۱۷۱-۱۷۳

Allah has written down: I will most

.(certainly prevail, I and My apostle . . . (۵۸:۲۱

Most surely We help Our apostles and those who believe, in this world's life and on the .(day when the witnesses shall stand (۴۰:۵۱

As you see, these verses do not put any condition or restriction on the promised victory; the apostles and the believers shall be victorious over their adversaries in all .conditions and situations

It may be inferred from it that this divine source is something metaphysical, preternatural. Material things are, in their nature, measured and limited; they get the worst of it if they are faced by another thing which is superior in power. But this preternatural spiritual source, which is assisted by the will of Allah, is never defeated by any factor; whenever it is faced by any material adversary, it is given by Allah a far .more superior power to achieve victory with flying colours

Whatever is Caused by Psychical Power Depends on a Command from Allah .۵

Read again the last sentence of the verse ۴۰:۷۸, mentioned at the beginning of the :preceding chapter

but when the command of Allah came, judgement was given with truth, and those" ."who treated (it) as a lie were lost

You will see that the supernatural event caused by the psychical power of the agent depends on a command from Allah - in addition to His permission. That command may coincide with the said permission, or may be one with it. The command of Allah is His :creation, described by the word 'Be' in the verse

His command, when He intends anything, is only that He

.(says to it, "Be", and it is (۳۶:۸۲

:Also Allah says

Surely this is a reminder, so whoever wishes takes to his Lord a way. And you do not .(wish except that Allah wishes; surely Alldh is Knowing, Wise (۷۶:۲۹-۳۰

It is naught but a reminder for the worlds, for him among you who wishes to go straight. And you do not wish except that Alldh wishes, the Lord of the worlds (۸۱:۲۷- .(۲۹

These verses show that the affairs which are within the sphere of the man's will, and under his control and authority, are still dependent on the divine will for their existence. What these verses say is this: The intentional actions of a man are done by .his will; but that will itself depends on the will of Allah

The verses do not say that whatever is wished by man is wished by Allah. Had it been the case, no human wish would have remained unfulfilled - because it would have ;become the will of Allah! Also, many verses refute this idea

And if We had wished We would certainly have given to every soul its guidance . . . .((۳۲:۱۳

And if your Lord had wished surely all those who are in the earth would have believed .((۱۰:۹۹

Our will depends on the divine will; our action depends on our will, and also they depend - indirectly, through our will -on the will of Allah. And both our will and action ."depend on the command of Allah - on His word, "Be

Things, affairs and events

may be either natural or supernatural; and the super-natural may be either on the side of good, like miracle, or on that of evil, like magic and sooth saying. But all of them come into being through natural causes, and at the same time they depend on the will of Allah. In other words, they cannot come into being unless the natural cause .coincides, or becomes one, with the permission and command of Allah

All things are equal in this respect; but when a prophet brings about a miracle, or a good servant of Allah prays to Him for a thing, an additional factor, that is, the decisive command of Allah, is added thereto; and the desired effect or event unfailingly comes :into being. Allah says

; (Allah has written down: I will most certainly prevail, I and My apostles (۵۸:۲۱

.(I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me. . . (۲:۱۸۶

.See also other such verses quoted in the preceding chapter

۶. The Qur'an Attributes the Miracle to an Invincible Cause

The preceding chapters have made it clear that miracle, like other natural and super-natural things, needs a natural cause; and that all causes depend on some metaphysical causes. All these events and effects may, thus, be divided into four :categories

First: The normal events: They come into being by normal apparent causes which are accompanied by real causes - in most cases those real causes are material ones; arid .those causes depend on the divine will and. command

Second: The extra-ordinary events of evil nature, like sorcery and sooth saying: They

are caused by natural but unusual and abnormal causes, which are accompanied by .the real causes; and those causes depend on the divine permission and will

Third: The extra-ordinary events of good nature, like a prayer answered by Allah: They are caused by the natural and real cause, with permission and will of Allah - but such events do not contain any element of challenge, that is, they do not purport to .prove the truth of any call or claim

Fourth: The miracles: The extra-ordinary, super-natural events of good character, which are brought about as a challenge, to prove the truth of the call or claim. They .too are caused by the natural and real causes with permission and will of Allah

The third and fourth categories have an extra quality in them: Their cause is fortified by an invincible factor; it can never be overpowered, as it is always accompanied by .the decisive command of Allah

Question: It is strange to say that miracle is caused by a natural cause. Suppose, we discover the real natural cause of a miracle; will it not then be possible for us to create that miracle? If yes, then miraculousness would be a relative matter; any action would be a miracle in the eyes of those who are unaware of its cause, but quite an .ordinary thing for those who know

In the same way, an event that was believed to be a miracle in dark ages would not be so impressive in this age of science and

knowledge. If scientific research found out the real natural causes of the miracles, there would be no miracle at all – and no miracle could be used to prove the truth of .the prophet's claim

What all this leads to is this: A miracle is not a proof except against him who is ignorant of its natural cause; therefore, it cannot be put as an evidence of the truth of the .prophet's claim

Reply: Miraculousness of a miracle does not depend on unknowability of its cause; nor is it a miracle because it emanates from an extraordinary or mysterious cause. It is a miracle because it is brought about by such an extraordinary cause which is invincible, .which cannot be overcome, cannot be defeated

Let us look at the case of a seriously sick person, who, all of a sudden, is cured by the prayers of a believer. It is called a miraculous event, because it emanates from an invincible cause. We know that patient could be cured by medical treatment, and it would have been a normal process; but this cause, that is, the medical treatment, could be foiled by other more powerful factors; and that is why it is not called a .miracle

The Qur'an Counts Miracle as a Proof of the Truth of the Claim of Prophethood .۷

Question: What is the connection between miracle and veracity of the claim of prophethood? Reason fails to see any binding relation between the two. But the Qur'an time and again asserts this concomitancy, as may be seen in the stories of various prophets, for example, Hūd, Salih, Mūsa, `Isa

.(!and Muhammad (peace of Allah be on all of them

The Qur'an narrates that no sooner did they announce their claim than they were asked by their people to bring some miracle to prove the truth of their claim; and they .responded to it by showing the miracle

Not only that. Some of them were given their miracle even before their nations had :asked them for it. Allah told Mūsa (a.s.) at the start of his mission

.(Go you and your brother with My signs and be not remiss in remembering Me (۲۰:۴۲

:(.And He says about `Isa (a.s

And (will make him) an apostle to the children of Israel: "That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I create for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allah's permission and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead to life with Allah's permission and I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your house; most surely there is a sign in this for you, if .(you are believers" (۳:۴۹

The same is the position of the Qur'an which was given to the Prophet right at the start of his mission. The reason does not see any connection whatsoever between the truth of the message of an apostle or a prophet on one hand and his ability to show a .super-natural sign on the other

Moreover, the beauty of the principles expounded

by the apostles and the prophets, strengthened as it is by irrefutable proofs, dispenses with the need of any miracle - for an intelligent and knowledgeable person. That is why it is said that miracles are needed for convincing the simple-minded people, because they cannot understand a learned discourse; but knowledgeable .persons do not need them

Reply: The prophets had not brought the miracles to prove any principle of religion, like belief in Oneness of God and the Day of Resurrection etc. - the truth of which could be realized by intellect and reason. They always proved such things with .reasoning and logical arguments

:For example, Allah says regarding the existence of the Creator

Their apostles said: "Is there doubt about Allah, the Master of the heavens and the ;(earth?" (۱۴:۱۰

:and He says about resurrection

And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve; then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the fire. Shall We treat those who believe an and do good like the mischief-makers in the earth? Or shall We make those who guard (against evil) like the wicked? .((۳۸:۲۷-۲۸

Why were, then, the apostles asked to show miracle, and why did they bring it about? It was to prove that they were in fact sent by Allah; it was meant to authenticate their .claim

The prophets claimed that they were sent by Allah, that He had revealed His message to them - either directly or

through an angel. It was an assertion of a super-natural event; a claim of a reality beyond the physical senses and mental cognization of their people; a fact above the .level of man's perception

If that claim was right, it would be a special metaphysical disposition reserved for the prophets only. The difficulty was that the prophets were like any other human being in their humanity and in its characteristics. How could they be favoured for this especial ?relationship with the world beyond nature

:The disbelievers, therefore, resorted to two methods to disprove the prophets' claim

:First Method: They tried to refute it through such "arguments" as the following

a) They said: "You are nothing but human being like us; you wish to turn us away from .(what our fathers used to worship" (۱۴:۱۰

The apostles were like all other men; and other men do not receive such divine revelation as was claimed by the apostles. If they could be given revelation from God, ?why could not others get it as well? Were not all of them alike in their humanity

:The apostles replied to it in these words

Their apostles said to them: "We are nothing but human beings like yourselves, but . (Allah bestows (His) favours on whom He pleases of His servants. . . " (۱۴:۱۱

They accepted that they were like all men in their humanity, but showed that apostleship was a very especial favour of Allah, and He bestows it on whom He pleases. It is not difficult to see that being alike

does not preclude some of them from being reserved for some especial favours. Of course, if Allah had pleased, He could have bestowed it on anyone among them, but He chose for this favour whom He pleased. The same was the thrust of their protest :against the Prophet

(Has the reminder been revealed to him from among us?" (۳۸:۸"

b) Of the same nature, but with added sarcasm, were the following remarks of the :polytheists of Mecca

And they say: "Why was not this Qur'an revealed to a man of importance in the two (towns?" (۴۳:۳۱

And they say: "What sort of apostle is this that he eats food and goes about in the marts; why has not an angel been sent down to him so that he be a warner with him? Or a treasure be thrown down to him, or be for him a garden from which he may eat!" ((۲۵:۷-۸

What they wanted to say was this: If the Apostle (of Islam) really has been chosen by God to receive divine revelation, then he must be someone above all the mortals. Then why does he require food to eat, and why is he obliged to go about in the ?markets to earn his livelihood

If he is truly a representative of God, he should have been accompanied by an angel to assist trim in his work, or he should have been given a treasure to save him the trouble of earning his livelihood in the markets, or a garden should have been bestowed

.on him, so that he would not need a food like ours

:Allah answered them in these words

See how they coin comparisons for thee! So they have gone astray, therefore they shall not be able to find a way . . . And We did not send before thee any messengers but they most surely ate food and went about in the markets; and We have made some of you a trial for others; will you bear patiently? And your Lord is Ever-seeing .((۲۵:۹,۲۰

And in reply to their demand for sending down an angel, it was said in another :chapter

And if We had made him angel, We would certainly have made him a man, and We .(would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused (۶:۹

:c) Going further, they raised their demands even higher

And those who do not hope for Our meeting, say: "Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or (why) do we not see our Lord?" Now certainly they are too proud of .(themselves and have revolted a great revolt (۲۵:۲۱

According to their thinking, there was no difference between them and the Prophet; all were human beings. Then why should he be reserved for this office of apostleship? They too should be visited by angels; or, even better, they should see the Lord. Allah :replied to them

On the day when they shall see the angels, there shall be no joy on that day for the guilty, and they shall say: "It is a forbidden thing

.(totally prohibited" (٢٥:٢٢

It means that if they persist in their disbelief, they shall not see the angels except at the time of death, and then they shall not find any joy in it. The same thing has been :mentioned in another verse

And they say: "O you to whom the Reminder has been revealed! you are most surely insane. Why do you not bring to us the angels if you are of the truthful ones?" We do .(not send the angels but with truth, and then they would not be respited (١٥:۶-٨

d) This last verse shows us one more twist of their "arguments". The Prophet, according to their thinking, was truthful in his claim of revelation, but he was insane; whatever news he brought was a product of his unstable mind and was, therefore, :not correct. The same "argument" was put against Nūh (a.s.), as the Qur'an says

.(and they called (Nūh) mad, and he was driven away (۵۴:٩ . . .

These were the variations of their "arguments" against the claims of the Prophet, the arguments which were based on similarity of the prophets and their people in their .humanity

Second Method: It was to reject outright the claim of the prophets, and demand from them proof of their veracity, asking them to bring some signs to show that they were .in fact representatives of Allah and recipients of His revelation

The apostles and the prophets claimed a distinction which was intangible and unknowable to their people. They claimed that they were given apostleship

and /or prophethood; that they were spoken to by Allah - either directly or through angels. Now, such a claim could not be verified by any test or experiment. It could be :objected against in two ways

i) There was no proof that such a claim was true; (ii) there was proof that it was not) true. Revelation, divine speech, (and the resulting sharī`ah and religious discipline) could not be experienced by anyone other than the claimant; the normal system of cause and effect was against it. If such a claim were true, it would mean that the Prophet was in direct contact with the world beyond nature; he was tuned to the divine power - the power that can change the course of nature can make the effect .appear without their usual causes

In that case, he should be able to produce some another tangible super-natural effect; after all one super-natural event is like any other super-natural event so far as the divine authority is concerned. If Allah spoke to the Prophet - a super-natural effect - He should show on his hands some other tangible super-natural effects in order to prove the truth of his former claim, that is, the claim that he receives .revelation from God

If God wanted to guide the people aright by means of a super-natural thing, that is, revelation, then let Him prove the truth of His Prophet by means of another super-.natural, that is, miracle

That was why the people asked for miracles whenever a prophet

was sent to them. They wanted miracles to verify his claim of prophethood, and not to ensure the truth of his teachings. Suppose a man is sent by a ruler to his subjects with his commands and laws. He reaches his destination and they ask him for his .credentials

Will they be satisfied if, at this juncture, he starts explaining the wisdom underlying each rule and regulation? Certainly not. They will say: All that you have said, just shows that these rules are based on wisdom and meant for our good; but it does not prove in any way that they are from our ruler, nor that you are his deputy authorized .to manage our affairs on his behalf

We shall believe in your claim only when you show us a credential to this effect, for example, an appointment letter duly signed by the ruler and having his official seal. It :is as the polytheists had said to the Prophet

.(until you bring down to us a book which we may read" (۱۷:۹۳ . . ."

.From the above explanation, two things become abundantly clear

First: Miracle has an inseparable. Connection with the truth of the claim of prophethood. Learned and ignorant, elite and common, all men need miracle in order .to be able to accept the truth of a prophet's claim

Second: What the prophet receives and perceives of the revelation is entirely different from those things which we feel by senses or comprehend by intellect. In plain words, revelation is not a function of

."mind; it is a reality totally separate from "right thinking

This fact is brilliantly clear from the Book of Allah; and no one, having an iota of common sense, can entertain any doubt about it. But in recent times some "scholars" have closed their eyes from this reality, and tried to reinterpret the spiritual facts and .divine knowledge in the light of the natural sciences

They have, accordingly, based their explanations on materialistic theory. They believe that human perception and comprehension is a characteristic of matter, emanating from the brain. They are of the opinion that all real merits and perfections - whether of an individual or of a group - are developments of matter only. Based on these premises, they have explained prophethood and all related spiritual factors on the :following materialistic lines

Prophethood is a sort of a sharp mental power, an intellectual genius. The genius who is called prophet, looks at the social conditions of his nation; analyses what they have inherited of the beliefs, ideas, customs and superstitions; and then changes them to .conform with the needs of his time and place, in the most suitable manner

In that light, he frames for them the basic social principles and ordains practical rules and regulations - in order to raise their standard of life, to elevate their morality and ethics, to make them better members of society. Basing on this hypothesis, they have :declared that

.Prophet is an intellectual genius, who calls his people to the good of their social life (۱

(۲

.Revelation is the good thought which comes into his mind

۳) Divine book is the collection of those good thoughts and ideas, inasmuch as they .are free from personal desires and selfish motives

۴) Angels who, the prophet says come to him, are only the natural material forces which keep the world going. Or, they are psychological traits which lead the man to his perfection. The Holy Ghost is a higher development of those material forces, which .rains those pure ideas on the prophet's mind

Satan is a retrogression of the same material forces, which poisons the minds with evil thoughts and incites the people to anti-social deeds. In the same vein they have explained away all the realities which the prophets have told us about - like the Tablet, the Pen, the Throne, the Chair, the Book, the Reckoning, the Garden, and the .Fire

۵) .Religions are products of times; they change with the times

۶) The miracles, attributed to the prophets, are nothing more than myths and fictions; which were forged in the interest of religion, to strengthen the belief of common .people; or to enhance the prestige of religious leaders in the eyes of their followers

This in short is their explanation. But prophethood, in this meaning, should rather be called a political device than a divine reality. It is not possible here to throw light on its various facets. What the readers, however, should not overlook is that this interpretation has no resemblance whatsoever to what has been described in the Books

.of Allah and the Tradition of the prophets

What led these “scholars” to such interpretations was their total submission to materialistic theories; that was why they rejected every metaphysical reality, and .tried to bring it down to the level of lifeless matter

Such peoples are academic descendants of an earlier group: Many early theologians interpreted every religious reality – the Throne, the Chair, the Tablet, the Pen, the Angels etc. – in material terms, adding, at the same time, that those things existed beyond the grasp of our senses. Needless to say that that interpretation was not .based on any actual experiment or sensual perception

Now that the area of physical sciences has expanded so much, and every thing is being analyzed, tested and experimented on, this later generation was obliged to reject the idea of physical existence of those religious realities, because, as .mentioned above, their existence could not be proved by any test or experiment

Therefore, they had to invent other meanings for those realities, well within the area of sensual perception. They thought that they were serving the cause of religion in this way – because their interpretation would bring those realities within the sensual and physical recognition, and thus save them from being totally rejected by modern .scholars

Both groups have strayed from the right path. The ancient theologians correctly understood the meanings of these words, without resorting to any allegorical interpretation. But they erred when they thought that those were material things although beyond the purview of sensual perception, not

.subjected to the laws of matter

The modern scholars took the wrong way from the very start; they gave these words wrong meanings in their eagerness to make them conform to material realities; in .their attempt to pull these sublime truths down to the level of physical experience

The correct way is to explain these words according to the dictates of the language and the usage; then shall come the stage of identifying what, how and where, for example, the Pen is. This should be done with the help of other relevant verses. After the Pen is identified, it may be compared with current scientific ideas to check .whether it goes against them

If that examination reveals that the identified entity was beyond the domain of matter, then it should not be proved, or disproved, by the principles of physical .sciences. The science is concerned with material and physical things

What authority has it got to judge metaphysical or spiritual things? Can we allow a linguist to prove, or disprove, a proposition of astronomy by the rules of grammar? If not, then why should the rules of physical sciences be applied to prove, disprove or ?interpret metaphysical realities

Qur'an

But if you do (it) not - and never shall you do (it) -then be on guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel; it is prepared for the unbelievers. And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them are gardens in which rivers flow; whenever they

shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say: “This is what was given to us before;- and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in .them; and in them they shall abide

The chapter began with description of three groups: the pious ones, the disbelievers and the hypocrites. But then all of them were joined together by the words, “O men!”, .calling them to worship Allah

In this context, they could be divided in two groups only: those who answered this call (i.e. the believers) and those who did not answer it (i.e. the disbelievers). The hypocrites do not come into this picture, probably because in their appearance they are with the first group, while in reality they are included in the second. Perhaps, that is why the previous designation of the first group (those who guard against evil) has .”been changed here for “those who believe

is fuel. The verse says that man himself is the fuel of the hell. He is (الوَقود) ”al-Waqud“ :his own fuel, to keep the fire burning, and to get himself burned in that fire. Allah says

.(then in the fire shall they be burned (۴۰:۷۲

.(It is the fire kindled by AllAh, which rises above the hearts (۱۰۴:۶-۷

.Man shall be burned in a fire that will be kindled and fueled by his own self

The next verse, ۲:۲۵, runs parallel to it and we find the same principle at work here also: “whenever they shall be given a

portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say: `This is what was given to us before;' and they shall be given the like of it". It indicates that man shall get there only what he has .himself prepared here

The Prophet has said: "As you live so you will die, and as you die so you will be raised." But the people of the paradise have a pleasant distinction vis-à-vis the people of the :fire, because they shall be given ever-increasing rewards by their Lord

.(They have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet (۵۰:۳۵

Of which men and stones are the fuel": The stones referred to here are the idols . . ." :which the disbelievers worshipped. Allah says

.(Surely you and what you worship besides Allah are the firewood of hell . . . (۲۱:۹۸

they shall have pure mates in them": The adjective "pure", inasmuch as it qualifies . . ." the "mates", refers to purity from all such things as may create aversion and unpleasantness - whether in their bodies or in their ehavior. In other words, the mates given to the believers in paradise will be free from every disagreeable .characteristic or trait

Tradition

as-Sadūq narrates that as-Sadiq (a.s.) was asked about this verse and he said: "The ".pure mates are the ones who shall be free from menstruation and other excrements

The Author says: Some other Tradition have expanded the meaning to include .cleanliness from all defective traits, all characteristics causing aversion

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۲۶-۲۷

point

(۲۶) إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِى أَن

يَضْرِبَ مَثَلاً مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَـذَا مَثَلاً يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلاَّ الْفَاسِقِينَ

(۲۷)الَّذِينَ يَنقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِن بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَن يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الأَرْضِ أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

Surely Allah is not ashamed to set forth any parable - (that of) a gnat or anything above that; then as for those who believe, they know that it is the truth from their Lord, and as for those who disbelieve, they say: "What is it that Allah means by this parable?" He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright by it, but He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors (۲۶),

who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder what Allah has ordered to be joined, and make mischief in the land; these it is that are the losers (۲۷).

Commentary

Qur'an

Surely Allah is not ashamed. . . : Gnat or mosquito is one of the smallest animals perceptible by naked eyes. These two verses run parallel to verses ۱۹ - ۲۱ of ch. ۱۳:

Is then he who knows that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the truth like unto him who is blind? Only those possessed of understanding shall bear in mind, those who fulfil the promise of Allah and do not break the covenant, and those who join that which Allah

.has bidden to be joined, and fear Allah and fear the evil reckoning

The verse clearly shows that there is a straying, a blindness, which afflicts the man as a result of his evil deeds; it is different from that initial straying and blindness which the man opts for by his own free will. Look at the sentence, "but He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors". They transgressed first, and it was only then .that Allah made them go astray

Guidance and misguidance are two comprehensive words; they encompass every felicity and infelicity that comes from Allah to His good and wicked servants respectively. As Allah describes in the Qur'an, He makes His good servants live a happy life, strengthens them with the spirit of faith, bring them out of the darkness into the light, and gives them a light by which they walk among the people; He has taken them under His protection and guardianship, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve; He is with them, answers them when they call on Him, and remembers them when they remember Him; and the angels come down to them with .good news of eternal peace

Diametrically opposed to it is the condition of evil-doers. Allah causes them to err, takes them out of the light into the darkness, sets a seal upon their hearts and hearings, and a covering over their eyes; He alters their faces turning them on their backs; places chains on their

necks and these reach up to their chins, so they have their heads raised aloft, and makes a barrier before them and a barrier behind them, then He covers them over so .that they cannot see

He appoints for them the Satans to become their associates, and they turn them away from the right path while they think that they are guided aright; those Satans make their misdeeds to seem good to them and they are their guardians; Allah leads them on by steps from whence they perceive not; and yet He respites them, but His plan is firm; He makes a plan for them and leaves them alone in their rebellion, blindly .wandering on

.These are some examples of the conditions of the two groups

On deeper consideration, it appears that man, in this world, lives two lives: there is this life which may be seen and perceived by all, and there is another life hidden behind this one; that hidden life is either good or bad - depending on his faith and deeds. Man will become aware of that hidden life when the veil of secrecy will be .removed after death. Then he will see himself in his true form

Further, it appears from the Qur'anic verses that man has had a spiritual life before the life of this world; and he shall have another life after this one. In other words, man has been given three lives - this life in this world is the second one, there was one

preceding it and there will be another following. The condition of the third life shall be .determined by that of this second life - which, in its turn, is governed by the first one

Many exegetes have explained away the verses about the first life; they say that it is only a literary style, which presents imaginary pictures as real facts. And as for the verses concerning the life hereafter, they too are misrepresented as allegories and metaphors. But both types of verses are too clear in this meaning to allow such .misinterpretations

We shall explain the verses about the first life under ch. ۷. As for the life hereafter, many verses show that the same good or bad deeds which man commits in this life, shall be returned to him, as their own reward or punishment, on the day of requital. :Allah has mentioned this fact in many verses

- and do not make excuses today; you shall be recompensed only what you did . . . ;((۶۶:۷
- then every soul shall be paid back in full what it has earned, and they shall not be ;(dealt with unjustly. (۲:۲۸۱
- ;(then be on guard against the fire of which men and stones are fuel (۲:۲۴
- Then let him summon his council, We too would summon the tormentors (of the hell) ;((۹۶:۱۷-۱۸
- On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it ;(has done of evil . . . (۳:۳۰
- they eat . . .

;(nothing but fire into their bellies . . . (۲:۱۷۴

.(surely they only swallow fire into their bellies . . . (۴:۱۰ . . . •

.There are many verses of the same import

:Then there is the verse ۵۰:۲۲, which by itself is enough to convince one of this principle

Certainly you were heedless, of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so .your sight today is sharp

The words, “you were heedless of it”, indicate that there was something present in this world, to which the guilty one has not paid any attention; “removed from you your veil” means that, but for that veil, he could have seen that reality even in this worldly .life

What the man would see on the Day of Resurrection was present even in this earthly life; otherwise, it would not be logical to say that previously you were inattentive to it, or that it was hidden from your eyes, but now that the cover has been removed, you .may see it clearly

There is no allegory or metaphor in these verses. Try to explain in plain Arabic the principle which we have mentioned just now. You will not find a more explicit way than the one used in these verses. Then, how can they be explained away as allegories? -:The divine talk here points at two realities

First: Recompense: What a man will get in hereafter - reward or punishment, paradise or hell - shall be in recompense of the good or evil he would have done

.in this life

Second: Embodiment of the deeds: Many verses indicate that the good or evil deeds themselves turn into their own pleasant or unpleasant recompense. (Or, that the recompense is an inseparable concomitant of the deeds themselves.) It is hidden .from our eyes in this life, but we shall see it clearly on the day of reckoning

These realities are not really two. But we had to explain it in this way to bring it nearer .to the minds. The Qur'an too says that it uses similitudes to make people understand

"Qur'an: but He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors:"al-Fisq (الفِسق = transgression, sinfulness). It is the Qur'an that, first of all, used this word in its now prevalent meaning. It is derived from fasaqati 't-tamrah (فَسَـقَنت التّمره = the date .(broke out of its outer rind

That is why it has been further explained by the words, "who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation" - a thing must be whole before it is broken. Also the transgressors are described at the end of the verse as the losers - one must be :owning a thing before he can lose it. Allah further says

Surely the losers are they who have lost themselves and their people on the .(resurrection day (۴۲:۴۵

" All these expressions show how appropriate the adjective, "al- fasiqīn (الفاسقين= the .transgressors) is in this context

You should never think that the adjectives used by Allah in His book for His good servants (like

those who are near to Allah", "the sincere ones", "the humble ones", "the good ones"," "the purified ones" etc.) or for the evil ones (like "the unjust", "the transgressors", "the losers", "those who go astray", etc.) are cheap epithets, or that they are used as .literary embellishment

Each adjective has its own significance; each points to a particular stage in man's spiritual journey. Each has its own characteristics, and gives rise to its special effects and consequences. On physical level, every age has its own characteristics and powers, which cannot be found before or after that age; likewise, on spiritual plane, .every attribute has its own special effects

An Essay On Compulsion And Delegation

The sentence, "but He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors", explains how Allah manages the actions of His servants. Does He compel them to act in a pre-determined way? Or, has He delegated to them all powers in this respect? It .is better to solve this knotty problem here and now, by the guidance of the Qur'an

:Allah says

- ;(Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's (۲:۲۸۴
- ;(His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth (۵۷:۵
- .(to Him belongs the kingdom, and to Him is due (all) praise (۶۴:۱

These and other similar verses prove that to Allah belongs the whole universe; His ownership is unconditional and unlimited. A man owns a thing, let us say, a donkey; he .may use it and take its advantage to a certain extent only

For example, he

may ride it or use it as a beast of burden; but he cannot starve it to death, nor can he burn it alive. Why? Because his ownership is not absolute; society would condemn him if he were to commit such atrocities. His ownership allows him certain advantages .only; and not every possible use

But when we say that Allah is the Owner of the worlds, we mean absolute, real and unrestricted ownership. There is no owner except Allah; the things own, or control, for .themselves neither any harm nor any profit, neither life, death nor resurrection

It is only Allah who owns and controls every affair of every creature; He may do with them whatever He pleases; no one can ask Him why; He cannot be blamed or questioned for anything He does, because He is the absolute Owner. He has, of course, allowed some of His creatures to use some other things to a certain limits; but both the user and the used are His property; and the user cannot exceed the .authorized limit

Allah, as the absolute Owner, cannot be questioned about His dispositions; but others :have to give account of how they exercised their authority. Allah says

;(who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? (۲:۲۵۵

;(there is no intercessor except after His permission(۱۰:۳

;(that if Allah please He would certainly guide all the people?(۱۳:۳۱ . . .

And if Allah please He would certainly make you a single nation, but He causes to err whom He pleases and

;(guides whom He pleases . . .(۱۶:۹۳

;(And you do not please except that Allah please (۷۶:۳۰

He cannot be questioned concerning what He does and they shall be .(questioned(۲۱:۲۳

Allah disposes and manages His property in any way He pleases; no one can use any other thing except with His permission, because He is the real Owner and Sustainer of .everything

Now we come to the rules and laws which Allah ordains for His creatures. He uses the same method which has been adopted by the human society – ordaining what is good and praising and rewarding its doers; forbidding what is bad and condemning and ,punishing its doers. For example

:He says

(If you give alms openly, it is well (۲:۲۷۱

.(evil is a bad name after faith (۴۹:۱۱ . . .

Obviously, the laws ordained by Allah look at the good of man, and aim at perfecting :the human society. Allah says

answer (the call of) Allah and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you . . . ;(life (۸:۲۴

;(that is better for you, if you know (۶۱:۱۱

Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the ;(giving to kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion (۱۶:۹۰

.(Surely Allah does not enjoin indecency (۷:۲۸

There are many such verses; and they show that the principles which the laws are based upon are always the same – be it a divine commandment or a human

legislation. What is good in itself and ensures the good of the

p: ١٨٠

society is allowed, enjoined and prescribed; and what is evil in itself and endangers the social structure is forbidden; man is praised and rewarded for doing the former, :and blamed and punished for doing the later. Some of those principles are as follows

People do whatever they do because of its underlying wisdom and good. Legislation of laws is no exception to this rule; the laws too are made because of their underlying good and benefit. They reward the law-abiding citizens and chastise, if they so wish, the law-breakers. The said recompense must be correlated to the action done - in its .quantity and quality

Also, it is accepted that the enjoinment and prohibition can be addressed to him only who is not under any duress or compulsion who has got freedom of will and choice. The above-mentioned recompense too is related to such actions only which emanate .from free will and choice

Of course, if someone, by his own action, puts himself in a tight corner, in a difficult position where he has to transgress a law, he may be justly punished for that trans-.gression, and his plea of helplessness will not be heeded at all

Allah uses these same principles in His dealing with His creatures. He does not compel the man to obey or to disobey the divine commands. Had there been any compulsion, rewarding the obedient ones with the paradise and punishing the disobedient ones with the hell would have been absolutely wrong: the reward would have been an unprincipled

venture, and the punishment an unmitigated oppression and injustice – and all of it is .evil according to reason

Moreover, it would mean favouring one against the other without any justification, without any cause – and this too is a demerit according to reason. Furthermore, it :would provide the aggrieved party with a valid argument against Allah; but Allah says

so that people should not have an argument against Allah after the (coming of) . . . ;(apostles (۴:۱۶۵

that he who would perish might perish by clear proof and he who would live might . . . .(live by clear proof (۸:۴۲

-:The above discourse makes the following points clear

First: Divine laws are not based on compulsion. These rules have been made for the good of man in this life and the hereafter. And they have been prescribed for him because he has freedom of will, he may obey the rule if he so wishes, and may disobey if he so chooses. He will be fully recompensed for whatever good or bad he .does by his free will

Second: There are things and actions which are not in conformity with the divine sanctity, yet the Qur'an attributes them to Allah, like misleading, deceiving, scheming against someone, leaving him wandering on in his rebellion, letting the Satan overpower the man and become his associate. All these actions are related to various .kinds of misleading and misguidance

But Allah is above all defects and demerits, and, therefore, these words when attributed to Him, should convey a meaning

in keeping with His sacred name. Initial misleading, even in the sense of making inattentive and forgetful, cannot be ascribed to Allah. What the above-mentioned :expressions actually mean is this

When someone by his own free will, opts to go astray, chooses the wrong path and commits sins, then Allah leaves him in that straying, and, thus, increases his error - it :is done as a punishment of his wrong choice. Allah says

He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright, by it, but He does not cause to .(err by it (any)except the transgressors (۲:۲۶

.(when they turned aside, Allah made their hearts turn aside (۶۱:۵ . . .

.(Thus does Allah cause him to err who is extravagant, a doubter (۴۰:۳۴

Third: The divine decree does not cover the actions of the man inasmuch as they are attributed to him - they are done by the doer, although not created by him. We shall .further explain it later

Fourth: Now that it has been seen that the divine law is not based on compulsion, it .should be clearly understood that it is not based on delegation of power either

How can a "master" issue an authoritative command if he has delegated all his powers to the servant. In other words, this theory of delegation negates the .comprehensive ownership of Allahvis-à-vis many of His possessions

Tradition

A great number of Tradition (narrated from the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt - a.s.) says: "There is neither compulsion nor delegation (of power), but (there is) a position

".(between these two (extremes

:It is reported in 'Uyūnu '۱-akhbar, through several chains

When the Leader of the faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Talib (a.s.) returned from Siffīn, an old man (who has participated in that battle) stood up and said: "O Leader of the faithful! Tell "?us about this journey of ours, was it by Allah's decree and measure

The Leader of the faithful said: "Yes, O Shaykh! By Allah you did not ascend any elevation, nor did you descend to any valley but by a decree of Allah and by His measure." The old man, thereupon said: "I leave to Allah all my troubles (of this :journey), O Leader of the faithful!" ('Alī - a.s.) replied

Have patience, O Shaykh! Perhaps you take it to mean a firm decree and a com..." pulsory measure! If it were so, then there would be no justification of reward or punishment, no sense of command, prohibition or admonition, no meaning of promise or threat; there would not be any blame on an evil-doer nor any praise for a good-.doer

Nay, the good-doer would have been rather more deserving of blame than the evil-doer, and the evil-doer rather more worthy of grace than the good-doer. (Beware!) this is the belief of the idol-worshippers and the enemies of the Beneficent God (who .are) the Qadariyyah of this ummah and its Majūs

O Shaykh! Verily Allah ordained (the sharī'ah) giving freedom of will (to men) and prohibited (evil) to keep us on guard; and He gave plentiful (reward) on meager (deeds); and

He was not disobeyed by being overpowered, nor was He obeyed by compulsion; and He did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve on account of the fire."

The author says: The topics of the speech of Allah and His decree and measure were among the earliest about which the Muslims differed among themselves. This second dispute may be described as follows:

The eternal divine will govern everything in the universe. These things are transient in their quiddity; but when they do exist, they do so because the will of Allah decreed their existence - and in this way their existence becomes essential - otherwise, the divine decree would be meaningless.

Conversely, when a thing does not exist, it is because Allah did not decree its existence - and in this way its existence becomes impossible - otherwise, the divine will would be meaningless. In short, whatever exists, exists because Allah has decreed its existence, - thus turning it into an essential being. This principle applies everywhere.

But the difficulty arises when it comes to such a human action that issues from our own will and choice. We know that we can do it if we so desire, and can ignore it if we so wish. Their doing and not doing is equally possible to us. The balance is tipped in favour of either side by our own will and choice. Our actions are based on our choice, and

:our will brings them into existence. The difficulty that arises at this point is this

We have earlier seen that nothing comes into being without the will and decree of Allah, which turns the thing into an essential being – if so, then how can any action of ours be termed as "possible" one? It must exist because the divine will has decreed it! ?Moreover, how can our will affect it in any way when it is governed by the will of Allah

Also, in this background, it cannot be said that man had power to do a certain work before he did it. And, because he did not have that power, Allah could not give him any .order or command for or against that work

Going a step further, if Allah gave him an order and he did not comply, it would mean that Allah Himself had not wanted that thing to happen; so it was impossible for it to happen. Then the question would arise: How could Allah order him to perform an impossible task? Conversely, if someone complied with that order, it was because Allah Himself wanted it to happen. Then why should the man be rewarded without any ?valid reason

By the same reasoning, a sinner should not be punished, as it would be against justice, a naked oppression. One may go on enumerating the difficulties arising out of this subject. A large number of Muslims felt obliged to admit, and believe in, all these :absurdities. They said that

Man does

not have power to do a work before the time comes to do it. The reason has nothing to do with the merit or demerit of any action. Whatever Allah does become good; and .whatever He forbids becomes evil

Accordingly, Allah may choose an action without any justification; He may give reward without any cause; He may ordain laws beyond the capacity of the doer or agent; He may inflict punishment on a disobedient servant even though the said disobedience .and transgression was not of his doing

It appears that the old man, who had asked the question, thought that the belief in the divine will and decree meant that there was no merit or demerit in any action and .(that man had no right of any reward (or punishment

Naturally he was disappointed when he heard that the journey was by the decree of Allah; that is why he said: “I leave to Allah all my troubles.” What he meant was this: My journey to Siffīn and back and my fighting in the way of Allah had no benefit for me as it was governed and done by the will of Allah; my share in all this venture was only .the trouble and the inconvenience which I underwent

Therefore, I shall leave it to Allah to balance my account, as it was He Who put me through all these troubles. The Imam ('Alī) replied to him by saying, “If it were so, . . there would be no justification of reward or punishment

The Imam pointed to the rational principle on which the legislation is based. And at ". the end he reasoned that Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is .between them in vain

If Allah could will the man's actions in a way as to deprive him of his freedom of will and choice, it would mean that He could do things without any purpose and aim; then He could create the whole creation aimlessly and in vain. This in its turn would render .the principle of resurrection and reward and punishment invalid too

It is narrated in at-Tawhīd and 'Uyūnu 'l-akhbar that ar-Rida (a.s) was asked about compulsion and delegation, and he said: "Should I not teach you in this regard a principle by which you shall never differ (among yourselves), and no one will argue with you on this subject but that you shall defeat him (by it)?" We said: "(Teach it to us) ".if you so please

Thereupon he said: "Verily Allah is not obeyed through compulsion, nor is He dis-obeyed by overpowering; and He did not leave the servants remiss in His kingdom; He (still) owns what He has given into their possession, and has power on what He has .put into their power

Now, if the servants decided to obey Him, He would not prevent them from it, nor would he put any obstruction to it; and if they decided to disobey Him, then if He pleased to bar their way to it He would

do so, and if He did not hinder it and they committed it, then it was not He Who led them into that (sin)." Then the Imam said: "Whoever would accurately delineate the boundaries of this speech would surely overcome his adversary."

The author says: Why did "al-Mujabbirah (المُجَبِّره = the believers in compulsion) say what they said? It was because they pondered on the divine decree and measure, and it led them to the conclusion that when Allah decrees a thing it must happen inescapably.

Their deliberation of this subject was correct, and so was the conclusion arrived at. Where they fell in error was in correlating that conclusion with reality; they did not understand the difference between a reality and an idea based on subjective approach; they forgot the distinction between essentiality and possibility.

It is correct to say, on the basis of the divine decree and measure, that nothing happens in this world unless it turns an essential being; it is because everything and every affair comes into being when it is decreed by Allah, according to the measure prescribed by Him; and then it cannot fail to happen, otherwise the decree of Allah would fail.

At the same time, it should be kept in mind that a transient or possible thing becomes essential because of its sufficient cause. When looked at in conjunction with its sufficient cause, it would be called "essential"; but separated from that cause, it would remain as it was before - a transient or possible thing.

p: ۱۸۹

.Let us look at an action of man which he does by his free will and choice

When we look at it in relation to all things that are necessary to bring it into being - knowledge, will, proper tools and organs, the material, formal, efficient and final causes, and all the conditions of time and space - it will become an essential being; .and it is in this context that it become subject of the eternal divine will

In other words, it becomes an essential being when all aspects of its sufficient cause are complete. But, looked in relation to each of those aspects separately, it remains only a transient and possible thing. If it is seen vis-à-vis its efficient cause only, that is, in relation to the doer only, it will retain its characteristics of transience and possibility .- it will not become an essential being

It is now clear to see at which point the believers in "compulsion" have deviated from the right path. They thought that, inasmuch as the human action was subject to the divine will and decree, man had no power on it; he was not a free agent; he was .rather a helpless tool in divine hands

But they did not take into consideration the fact that the divine will takes it into hand .only when all aspects of its sufficient cause are complete, and not before that

The divine will decrees that a certain action be done by Zayd - not unconditionally, but on the condition that

it is done by Zayd's free will, at a certain time and a certain place. Therefore, its relation to the divine will itself demands that it should be an action of a free agent, .done by his own free will and choice

Doubtlessly, that action will be called an "essential" one if seen in relation to the divine will; but at the same time and by virtue of the same divine will, it will be a possible and .transient action when related to the doer, that is, the man

In other words, there are two wills - the human and the divine; they do not run parallel to each other; the divine will comes after and above the human will - they are .in a vertical, and not a horizontal position to each other

Therefore, there is no competition or collision between the two wills. It was a short-sightedness on part of the believers in compulsion to negate the human will in order .to establish the divine one

The Mu'tazilites said that human actions are done by man's free will. But they went to the other extreme, and fell in an error no less objectionable than that of al-Mujabbirah. They too said that if human action was subjected to the divine will man would not have any freedom of will and choice. And then they took a position diametrically opposed to that of al-Mujabbirah, and came to the conclusion that the .divine will had no relation whatsoever to the human action

Thus they had to

accept another creator - the man himself - for human actions. In this way, they accepted dualism without knowing what they were doing. Going further they fell into traps more harmful than the belief of al-Mujabbirah. As the Imam has said: “The poor al-Qadariyyah, they wanted to emphasize the justice of Allah, so they removed Him from His power and authority. . . ”

A master, showing kindness to one of his slaves, married him to a slave-girl of his; he bestowed on him a property, gave him a well-furnished house and provided him with all the necessities of life. Then there came some people there, looked at his property, and began arguing among themselves. Someone said:

“Even though the master has given this property to his slave and has made him its owner, the slave has no right in, or authority over, this property at all. Does any slave own anything? The slave together with all his belongings belongs to the master.”

Another said: “No. You are wrong. The master has bestowed on this slave the right of property. Now the slave is its absolute owner, and the master has lost all his rights, and authority over this property. We may say that he has abdicated in favour of his slave. ”

The former was the opinion of al-Mujabbirah; the later that of the Mu'tazilites. But both were wrong. The correct view would have been to say: The master has got his status of mastership; the slave his position of servitude and bondage.

.The master has made the slave owner of his (i.e., master's) property

The property belongs to the master at the same time that it belongs to the slave. There are two ownerships - one over the other. This is what the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt .(a. s.) have taught us to believe, and what the reason supports

Abayah ibn Rib'ī al-Asadī asked 'Alī, the Leader of the faithful, the meaning of' "capability". The Leader of the faithful asked a counter question: "Do you have that capability without God or with God?" When 'Abayah remained silent, he told him, "Tell "!me, O 'Abayah!" He said: "What should I say? O Leader of the faithful

He said: "You should say that you have got that capability by (grace of) Allah, to Whom it belongs and not to you. If He made you its owner, it would be of His bounties, and if He took it away from you, it would be a trial from Him; and He is the Owner of what He gave into your possession, and has power over what He put under your power. . ." ((al-Ihtijaj

.The author says: Its meaning may be understood from the preceding explanation

al-Mufīd reports in his Sharhu 'l-'aqa'id: It has been narrated from Abū 'l-Hasan, the third, (a.s.) that he was asked whether the actions of the servants were created by Allah. He (a.s.) said: "If He were their creator, He would not have disowned their .liability

:And He (Allah) has said

Verily, Allah is free from liability to

.(the idolaters . . . (٩:٣

It does not mean that Allah was not responsible for the creation of the idolaters; what ".Allah has disowned any responsibility of, is their idol worship and their evils

The author says: There are two aspects of a deed – its actual existence, and its relation to its doer. It is only when an action is seen in relation to its doer that it is called obedience or disobedience, good or bad, virtue or sin. So far as actual existence .is concerned, there is no difference between marriage and fornication

What distinguishes one from the other is the command of Allah – marriage conforms with the divine law, and fornication goes against that law. Someone is killed without any reason; another is killed by a lawful authority in reprisal of a murder. A teacher punishes an orphan in order to guide him aright; an oppressor hits at the same .orphan unjustly

In all these examples, the actual movements of the actions are identical. But one group is called sin because it does not conform with the divine law or goes against the .common weal of the society

:Allah says

.(Allah is the Creator of everything. . . (٣٩:۶٢

Every action is a "thing" inasmuch as it exists. And the Imam has said: "Whatsoever :may be called a thing is created, except Allah. . ." Also, Allah says

.(Who made good everything that He has created. . . (٣٢:٧

It may be inferred that everything is good because it is created. Creation and goodness

are inseparable factors. But at the same time, we see that Allah has named some :actions as evil. For example, He says

Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it, and whoever brings an evil .(deed, he shall not be recompensed but only with the like of it . . . (۶:۱۶۰

These are obviously the actions done by man; not the factor of recompense which cannot apply to divine actions. Such a deed is called sin. It is evil because it lacks something; because it is a nullification of a spiritual virtue or social good. In other words, a sin is sin because it is a negation, a non-being; otherwise it would have been .good

:Now, let us look at the following verses of the Qur'an

No misfortune befalls on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We ;(bring it into existence. . . (۵۷:۲۲

No affliction comes about but by Allah's permission; and whoever believes in Allah, He ;(guides aright his heart . . . (۶۴ :۱۱

And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, ;(and (yet) He pardons most (of your faults) (۴۲:۳۰

Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allah, and whatever misfortune befalls you, ;(it is from yourself (۴:۷۹

and if a benefit comes to them, they say: "This is from Allah;"- and if a misfortune . . . befalls them they say: "This is from you." Say: "All is from Allah;" but what is

the matter with these people that well-nigh they do not understand what is told (them)? (۴:۷۸)).

On pondering upon these verses, it becomes clear that these misfortunes are relative evils. A man is bestowed with the bounties of Allah, like security and peace; health and wealth, and so on; then he loses one or more of these bounties.

This misfortune, in relation to that man, is evil because it has nullified some existing things, that is, the bounties which he had previously enjoyed. Thus, every misfortune is created by Allah, and at that stage it is not an evil. But it is an evil when seen in relation to the man who loses an existing bounty because of it.

Likewise, every sin is a negative factor, and as such, it is not to be attributed to Allah at all; though it may be attributed to Him from another angle, inasmuch as it happens by permission of Allah.

al-Bazanti said:

I told ar-Rida (a.s.) that some of our fellows believe in compulsion and some of them advocate the (belief of) capability. Thereupon he told me: "Write down (as I say): Allah, Blessed and High is He, has said: 'O son of Adam! By My will you have become such that you wish for yourself what you wish; and by My power you discharged the duties imposed by Me (on you); and by My bounty, you got power to disobey Me; I made you hearing, seeing (and) powerful.

Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allah; and

whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself. And it is as it is because I have more right on your good deeds than you have yourself; and you are more liable to your sins than Me. And it is because I cannot be questioned concerning what I do and they shall be questioned. Thus, I have arranged for you everything that you want. . .' ("(Qurbu '۱-asnad

This, or nearly the same, tradition is narrated through other chains, of the Sunnīs as well as of the Shī'ahs. In short, the deeds that cannot be attributed to Allah, are the :sins per se. It further explains the sentence of the preceding tradition

If he were their creator, He would not have disowned their liability . . . What Allah has" ". . .disowned any responsibility of, is their idol-worship and their evils

Abū Ja'far and Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: "Certainly, Allah is too Merciful to His creatures to compel them to sin and then to punish them for it. And Allah is too powerful for "!anyone to think that He would will a thing and it would not happen

The narrator) said: "Then they (a.s.) were asked: 'Is there a third position between) the (positions of) compulsion and (independent) capability?' They said: 'Yes, broader (than (the space) between the heaven and the earth."' (at-Tawhīd

Muhammad ibn 'Ajlan said: "I asked Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) whether Allah has delegated (the authority of) the affair to the servants. He said: Allah is too honourable to delegate (the

authority) to them.' I said: 'Then has He compelled the servants in their deeds?' He said: Allah is too just to compel a servant on a deed and then to punish him for it.'" (.(ibid

In the same book Mihzam is reported as saying: "Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: "Tell me what is that concerning which our followers (whom you have left behind) have differed among themselves.' I said: 'About the compulsion and the delegation?' He said: 'Then ask me about it.' I asked: 'Has Allah compelled the servants to (commit) '?sins

He replied: 'Allah is too overpowering to do it to them.' I asked: 'Then has He delegated (the authority) to them?' He replied: 'Allah has too much power over them to do so.' I asked: 'Then what is it (i.e., the correct position)? May Allah make your affairs right for you!" (The narrator says:) "The Imam turned his hand twice or thrice, "'.then said: 'If I were to answer you concerning it, you would not believe

The author says: "Allah is too overpowering to do it to them": Compulsion means that a force majeure subdues the subject in such a way that his power of action is nullified. "Too overpowering" (or, more overpowering than that) is the predominant will of Allah – He has willed that the action would emanate from the doer by his free will and choice, and this is what is actually happening in the world. The divine will has given the man freedom of will; neither the divine

.will negates the human will, nor the human will collides with the divine will

It is reported in at-Tawhīd that as-Sadiq (a. s.) said: “The Apostle of Allah said: 'Whoever thinks that Allah enjoins the evil and indecency, he tells a lie against Allah; and whoever believes that the good and bad (do happen) without the will of Allah, he ”'.removes Allah from His authority

It is reported that al-Hajjaj ibn Yūsuf wrote to al-Hasan al-Basrī, 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd, Wasil ibn 'Ata' and 'Amir ash-Sha'bī, asking them to describe what they had got (and what has reached them) in respect of (divine) decree and measure. al-Hasan al-Basrī wrote to him: “The best thing that has reached me is that which I heard the Leader of :the faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Talib (a.s.) saying

Do you think that He Who has forbidden you has (also) acted cunningly against you?' Rather, your lower and higher (parts) have cunningly deceived you, and Allah is free from its liability.'” And 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd wrote to him: “The best thing I have heard about the decree and measure is the saying of the Leader of the faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī :(.Talib (a.s

If perfidy were in reality decreed, the perfidious man, if punished, would have been' oppressed.' ” And Wasil ibn 'Ata' wrote to him: “The best I have heard about the : (.decree and measure is the saying of the Leader of the faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Talib (a.s

Do you think that He would guide you to the'

path and (then) obstruct you (from moving on)?' " And ash-Sha'bī wrote to him: "The best thing I have heard concerning the decree and measure is the word of the Leader : (.of the faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Talib (a. s

Whatever you have to seek Allah's pardon for it, it is from you; and whatever you' thank Allah for it, it is from Him.' " When their letters reached al-Hajjaj and he studied (them, he said: "Certainly they have taken it from a clear spring." (at-Tara'if

It is narrated in the same book that someone asked Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (a. s.) about the decree and measure, and he replied: "Whatever you may blame the servant (of Allah) for it, it is from him; and whatever you cannot blame the servant (of :Allah) for it, it is the work of Allah. Allah will say to the servant

Why did you disobey? Why did you transgress? Why did you drink liquor? Why did you' fornicate?' This is, therefore, the work of the servant. But He will not say to him: 'Why were you sick? Why were you of short stature? Why did you become white? Why ".were you black?(He will not ask it) because it is the work of Allah

Alī (as.) was asked about monotheism and justice (of Allah), and he said: "Monotheism' is that you should not imagine Him; and justice is that you should not accuse Him." ((Nahju '۱-balaghah

The author says: There are numerous Tradition on this subject; but those

.quoted above throw light on all the aspects of the topic

The above-mentioned Tradition show various special methods of argument regarding .the subject matter

a) Some of them argue on the basis of legislation itself - order and prohibition; punishment and reward etc. - that man has freedom of will, without any compulsion or delegation of power. See, for example, the speech of the Leader of the faithful, 'Alī (as.), replying to the old man. It is similar to the argument we have inferred from the .words of Allah

b) Others bring in evidence the verses of the Qur'an which cannot be reconciled with :the theory of compulsion or delegation of power. For example

;(And Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth (۳:۱۸۹

.(and your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants (۴۱:۴۶

,Also, there is the verse

. (Say: "Surely Allah does not enjoin indecency" (۷:۲۸

Poser: A deed may be described as unjust or indecent if it is seen in relation to us. But when it is attributed to Allah it is not called unjust or indecent. Therefore, even if all "our" deeds were actually done by Allah, it would be perfectly right to say that He is .not unjust and does not enjoin indecency

Reply: The sentence seen in the context leaves no room for such misconceptions. The :complete verse is as follows

And when they commit an indecency they say: "We found our fathers doing this and Allah has enjoined it on us " Say: "Surely Allah does not enjoin

"?indecency. Do you say against Allah what you do not know

Look at the sentence, "and Allah has enjoined it on us". The pronoun "it" clearly refers to the indecency committed by them; and it is the same deed which is referred to in the sentence, "Surely Allah does not enjoin indecency,". Allah does not enjoin what is termed as indecency in context of human activities; it does not matter whether in .other framework it is called indecency or not

c) A third type of reasoning is based on the divine attributes. Allah has given Himself many good names, and has described Himself with many sublime attributes, which .cannot be squared with compulsion or delegation of power

Allah is the Subduer, the Omnipotent, the Benevolent and the Merciful. These attributes can only be believed in if one believes that everything depends on Allah in its existence, and that its defects and shortcomings cannot be attributed to Him at all. (.(Refer to the Tradition quoted from at-Tawhīd

d) Yet others refer to seeking the pardon of Allah as well as to the blame which society directs at the wrong-doer. If sin were not from the man himself, there would have been no meaning in asking for divine pardon. If all our actions were done by Allah why ?should we be blamed for only some of them and not for the others

e) Lastly, there are the Tradition which explain the words, like causing to err, sealing :the hearts and misleading, when they are attributed to Allah

ar-Rida

a.s.) said explaining the words of Allah, and He (Allah) left them in utter darkness -) they do not see: "Allah is not described as leaving something as His creatures do. But when He knew that they would not return from disbelief and error, He held back His (help and grace from them and let them alone with their choice." ('Uyunu '۱-akhbar

The same book narrates from the same Imam in explanation of the words of Allah, Allah has set a seal upon their hearts: "It is setting a seal on the hearts of the :disbelievers as a punishment of their disbelief, as Allah has said

nay! Allah has set a seal upon them owing to their disbelief, so they shall not . . . ".(believe except a few (۴:۱۵۵

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said concerning the words of Allah, Surely Allah is not ashamed to set forth any parable. . .: "This divine word answers those who think that Allah makes (His) "(servants go astray and then punishes them for that straying . . . (۱)

.The author says: Its meaning may be understood from previous explanations

A Philosophical Discussion

Every species is related to a particular type of action and reaction. In fact it is these special characteristics which identify the species as such. We looked at various kinds .of actions and reactions emanating from various groups

Our reason told us that there should be an efficient cause, an agent, to bring each kind of these actions and reactions into being. Therefore, we put every group in a separate

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Majma'u 'l-bayan -۱

category, identifying it as a species. When we compared human characteristics, for example, with those of an animal, and delineated them clearly, we decided that they were two different species, with different characteristics.

When the actions are seen in relation to their subjects, that is, the species, they are primarily divided into two categories:

First: The actions emanating from the nature – where the knowledge of their emanation has no effect at all on their existence. For example, the growth and nutrition of the vegetables; the movement of the bodies; our own health or illness.

These things are known to us, present in our own bodies; but our knowing or not knowing them has no effect whatsoever on their coming into being; they totally depend upon their doer – that is, nature.

Second: The actions issuing forth from the doer with his knowledge – where the said knowledge has a bearing on their being, like the intentional actions of the man and even of some animals. The doer does such an action after knowing and identifying it; and it is the knowledge and perception that gives him that insight.

The knowledge makes him realize what would constitute his perfection, and helps him in deciding whether a particular action would lead to that desired perfection. The knowledge distinguishes the means of perfection from other things; and this distinction helps the doer in choosing a particular course of action. And the action comes into being.

The activities based upon ingrained aptitude (like issuing forth of the required voices,

when a man speaks), as well as those emanating from natural disposition, or from the dictates of nature (like breathing) and, likewise, those springing from overwhelming .grief or fear etc., do not require contemplation or meditation by the doer

Why? Because there is not more than one form of knowledge here, and the doer does not have to delay his activity awaiting a final decision. Therefore, he does it immediately. But in other cases, where the doer has before his eyes two or more possible forms of knowledge to choose from, he has to spend at least a few moments .in contemplation and deliberation

For example, Zayd is hungry, and he gets a bread. Its one aspect is that it may satiate his hunger; but there may be other aspects too - it may be another man's property, it may be poisoned, it may have become dirty and so on. Zayd has to reflect whether the bread is legally, morally and hygienically fit for consumption. When he reaches a .conclusion, the actions follows without any delay

The first type of activities is called involuntary, like natural reactions; the second type .is called voluntary, or intentional, like walking or talking

The intentional actions, emanating from man's knowledge and will, are again divided :into two categories

First: When the man decides to do - or, not to do - a certain work, he may do so entirely on his own, without being influenced by any other fellow. In the example given above, Zayd may decide, on his

own, not to eat the bread because it was someone else's property; or he may eat it in .spite of that snag. This is called a deed done by man's free will

Second: When the man opts for a certain course of action under the influence of someone else. A tyrant may force a helpless person to act according to that tyrant's instruction under duress. The poor fellow in this condition commits sins and crimes .against his own will. This is called a deed done under compulsion

Right? But let us look at this second category more closely. We have said that this kind of deed results from the compeller's compulsion; he does not allow any freedom to the doer, who has to take the only way left open by the oppressor. But even then, it is .the doer himself who decides to proceed on that way

It is true that the major factor leading to this decision was the tyrant's compulsion; but it is equally true that the decision was taken by the doer himself, even though it was taken to save himself from the tyrant's oppression. In short, even the deeds done under compulsion are done by the will of the doer. It follows that the division of .intentional actions into these two categories is not real, not based on actual facts

The intentional action is the one which emanates from knowledge and a will that tips the balance in its favour. This reality is found in the deed done under compulsion

as well as in the one done by free will. It makes no difference that it was some other man's force or fear that tipped the balance in one case and the doer's own thinking .that did so in the other

A man sitting near a wall looks up to find that it was about to fall; overcome by fear he sprints away from that place. And we say that he did so by his own free will. Suppose, .a tyrant threatens to bull-doze the wall over him if he did not move away

Overcome by fear, he sprints away from there. And we say that it was done under compulsion. But the fundamentals in both cases are the same. The man is overcome by fear and decides to move away. So, why should we put them in two different ?categories

Objection: There is enough difference between the two actions to warrant their assignment to two different categories. The deed done by free will is based on its underlying wisdom (in the eyes of the doer); the doer deserves praise or blame, and gets reward or punishment, for it. All these factors are simply absent in the case of a .deed done under compulsion

Reply: It is true. But these factors are based on subjective approach of the society. They do not have any existence outside the imagination. By talking on these subjective approaches we have crossed the limits of philosophy. Philosophy deals with the things that exist in reality, as well as with

those things' natural characteristics. What all this leads to is the conclusion that the .discussion whether man is free in his actions is beyond the scope of philosophy

:We may yet bring it back on the track of philosophy from another direction

A transient (possible) thing has equal relation with existence and non-existence. It, therefore, needs a sufficient cause to tip the balance in favour of existence, so that it .may come into being

The transient thing, when related to its sufficient cause, becomes an essential being - it becomes impossible for it not to exist. That is why it is said that a transient does not .come into being unless it becomes an essential being

A transient, by its definition, must have a sufficient cause for its existence. A transient existing without its sufficient cause is a contradiction in terms. And that cause gives it .the essentiality, so long as it exists

Now look at the universe at a glance. You will find a chain made up of unnumerable links, all of which would be essential beings. In other words, not a single existing thing .could be called a transient, so long as it exists

But this "essential - ness" comes to it only when it is looked at in relation to its .sufficient cause

The sufficient cause may be a single thing or a compound of various causes - the material, the formal, the efficient and the final causes, plus the necessary conditions .of time and space as well as other preliminaries

An effect when related

to its sufficient cause must invariably exist - because the said cause would make it essential. But when seen with only a part of that cause, or if related to any outside factor, it would not be essential; it would remain a transient as before.

If a transient, on being related to only a part of its sufficient cause (e.g., to its efficient cause only) become essential and come into being, its sufficient cause would be superfluous; and it would be a contradiction in term.

It shows that in this natural world two systems are found simultaneously: one of essentiality and the other of transiency. The system of essentiality covers the sufficient causes and their effects - there is no transiency in any part of this world, neither in any person nor in any action. The system of transiency permeates the matter and its potentialities when related to only a part of the sufficient cause.

Take any human action; if it is related to its sufficient cause - man (the efficient cause), knowledge and will (the final), matter (the material) and its shape (the formal) plus all conditions of time and space including removal of every hindrance - it would become essential. But if it is seen in relation to only its efficient cause, that is, man, it would remain transient.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the transient things need a cause for their existence because of their transiency. And this need would not end until the chain of cause and effect

finally reaches a cause Who is the Essential Being. This observation leads to the :following two conclusions

First: The need of an effect for its cause does not end on its being related to its transient cause. The need continues until it reaches the Final Cause, the Essential .Being

Second: This need emanates from its transient nature. It needs a cause to bring it into existence with all its characteristics and traits, including its relationship with its various .causes, fulfilling all the conditions of its existence

Now we may ponder upon the question of compulsion and delegation of power, :keeping in view the above-mentioned premises

First: No delegation of power: Man, like all other things and their actions, depends on the will of Allah, for his existence. In the same way, man's action depends on the will of Allah in its existence. Therefore, the Mu'tazilites' view - that human actions have no relation at all to the divine will - is completely baseless. There was no reason at all for .them to deny the decree and measure of Allah in respect of the man's actions

Second: No compulsion: This relation to the will of Allah, inasmuch as it is concerned with existence, keeps all the characteristics of the created thing in view. Every effect emanates from its cause - with all its characteristics which have any bearing on its .existence

A man's creation is attributed to Allah, keeping in view all its intermediary causes and condition - the father, the mother, the time, the place, the

.features, the quantity, the quality and a lot of other concomitants

Likewise, the action of man is attributed to Allah, keeping in view all its characteristics and conditions. When a man's action is attributed to Allah and His will, it does not cease to be the man's action; it is still caused by the said man's will. The will of Allah decrees that the action be done by the man emanating from the man's own free will .and choice

Therefore, it would be a contradiction in term to say that the action was no longer done by man's free will because it was related to the divine will. Allah Himself has decreed it to be a work of the man by his free will; how can it be said that the divine will lost its effectiveness and the action happened without the man's free will? It is now clear that the view of al -Mujabbirah - that the human action's relation to the .divine will nullifies its relation to the human will - is absolutely devoid of truth

The above discourse shows that the said action has a relation to the human will and a relation to the divine will; neither relation nullifies the other, because each is .connected with the other vertically, not horizontally

Third: The human action, when related to its sufficient cause; becomes essential. But seen in relation to only a part of the sufficient cause, it remains transient. For ,example, when the action is related to only its sufficient cause

.that is, man, it does not become essential, but remains transient as before

Therefore, what a group of modern materialist philosophers have said – that the whole system of nature is permeated by compulsion, and there is no free will at all in the universe – is totally wrong. As we have said, all effects in relation to their sufficient causes are essential, but, when related to only a part of the said causes, are transient.

And it is the foundation on which man's life is based. A man teaches and trains his child and then hopes that his efforts would bear fruit. If there was no freedom in the world, if everything was essential and had to happen anyhow, then all this teaching and training would be of no earthly use; there would remain no place for hope in human life.

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ٢٨–٢٩

point

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (٢٨)

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُم مَّا فِي الأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاء فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (٢٩)

How do you deny Allah and you were dead and He gave you life? Again He will cause you to die and again bring you to life; then you shall be brought back to Him (٢٨).

He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens; and He know all things (٢٩).

General Comment

The talk reverts again to the initial topic. The beginning

of the chapter dealt with three categories of mankind; then all were addressed together (verses ۲۱-۲۷) with the words, "O men", Now these verses describe the same .subject with a grater detail

The twelve verses, starting from here, depict the reality of man; show the potentialities of perfection which Allah has endowed him with; delineate the vast scope of his inner being; describe the various stages - death and life, and again death and life; then the return to Allah - through which he passes in his journey, explaining .that the final destination is Allah

In this context, the verses describe some basic bounties of Allah upon him - creative as well as legislative. He created for him all that is, in the earth and made the heaven subservient to him. He made him His deputy on the earth, ordered the angels to prostrate before him, put the first man into the Garden, opened for him the door of repentance and enhanced his prestige by guiding him to His worship. In this background, the opening words, "How do you deny Allah", serve to emphasize the .grace and bounty of Allah on man

Commentary

:Qur'an: How do you deny Allah . . . you shall be brought back to Him

:The verse is somewhat (though not exactly) similar to the verse ۴۰:۱۱

They shall say: "Our Lord! twice didst Thou give us death, and twice hast Thou give us ?life, so we do confess our faults; is there then a way to get out

This (later) is one

intervening period or life) between this =الْبرزَخ) of the verses that prove an al-barzakh world and the next. It says that Allah gives death twice. First is the death that .transfers us from this world

But when and where shall we be given the second death? Giving of death presupposes a preceding life. It means that man shall be given a life in the period intervening between this first death and the Day of Resurrection. This argument is .solid, and it has been offered in some Tradition too

Question: Both verses have exactly the same connotation. Both mention two deaths and two lives. According to the verse ۲:۲۸, the stage before the life of this world has been called the first death. Then comes the first life in this world, followed by the second death transferring the man to the next world, and lastly will come the second .life on the Day of Resurrection

The second verse (۴۰:۱۱) too should be interpreted in the same way, because both have the same import. It means that after the death of this world, there is no life .before the Day of Resurrection

Reply: It is wrong to say that the two verses have the same connotation. The verse ۲:۲۸ mentions one death, one causing to die and two givings of life; while the verse .۴۰:۱۱ is talking about two givings of death and two givings of life

There is a world of difference between "death" and "causing to die". "Causing to die" ;shows a preceding life

while “death” can be used just for absence of life – even when there was no life before .it

The verse ۴۰:۱۱ refers to the death after this life, then the life of the intervening period, then the death after that, and finally to the life on the Day of Resurrection. The verse ۲:۲۸ on the other hand, refers first to the lifeless state (“death”, and not “causing to die”) before coming to this world, then goes on mentioning this life, then death and then the life of the intervening period. There will be some delay before man is .returned to his Lord

then) denotes some delay. Its use here supports = ثُمَّ) ”The conjunctive used “thumma this explanation because after the life of the intervening period there shall come .again a death and only then the man shall be returned to Allah

Qur’an: and you were dead and He gave you life: It shows the reality of man and his existence. He is a being, ever-changing, ever proceeding on his path of perfection, step by step, stage by stage. Before coming into this world, he was dead, then he was made alive by Allah and came here; again he will be caused to die and then be made .alive again

:Allah says

and He began the creation of man from dust. Then He made his progeny of an . . . • extract, of water held in light estimation. Then He made him complete and breathed . . . into him of His spirit

;(۳۲:۷-۹)

- then We did grow it into another creation; so blessed be Allah, the best of the . . . creators (۲۳:۱۴);

- And they say: "What! when we have become lost in the earth, shall we then indeed be in a new generation?" Nay! they are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord. Say: "The angel of death who is given charge of you shall cause you to die, then to your Lord you shall be brought back" (۳۲:۱۰-۱۱);

- From it We created you and into it We shall send you back from it will We raise you a second time (۲۰:۵۵).

The verses will be explained when we shall come to them; they have been quoted here only to show that man is a part of the earth, he was created from it, gradually developed until he grew into "another creation"; this "another creation" proceeds on the path of his perfection; then the angel of death completely removes this "man" from the body; and he returns to Allah. This is the path which the man has to take to.

The divine decree has planned the universe in such a way that every thing is related to every thing else; there is a constant action and reaction between it and the rest of the creation. Man too influences, and is in turn influenced by, all that exists in the earth and in the heavens - the elements and their characteristics, the animal world, the vegetable world, the minerals, the water, the air

.and, in short, every creation of nature

The fact is that the scope of man's activities is much greater, and his circle far bigger than anything else's. He has been given thinking and reasoning powers, and, as a result of this unique gift of Allah, he influences the other creatures, manages them, arranges and rearranges them, manipulates them, destroys them, amends them and perfects them, on a scale unheard of outside his circle. Every creature is under his .domain

Sometimes he imitates nature by creating synthetic items for his needs; at other times he sets some forces of nature against the others. In short, he obtains, by all possible means, whatever he wants from whatever he wants. Passage of time has further strengthened his hands; now he has deeper insight in the working of nature, .and manipulates the system even more effectively

That is so that Allah may establish the reality by His words, and so that the truth of His :speech may be seen even more clearly

And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is .(in the earth, all, from Himself (۴۵:۱۳

:The verse following the verse under discussion, that is, ۲:۲۹, states the same fact

He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the .heavens, so He made them complete seven heavens

The context - description of the bounties of Allah bestowed on man - shows that it was for the benefit of man that Allah directed Himself

(!to the heavens and made them complete seven. (Ponder on the point

This is the path taken by the man in his journey of existence; and this is the imprint of his activities on the universe; it shows where he began from and what his final .destination is

Man's life in this world originates from nature, as the Qur'an confirms. But the same :book declares also that this very life emanates from Allah

;(and indeed I created you before, when you were nothing (۱۹:۹ . . .

.(Surely He it is Who originates and returns (۸۵:۱۳

Man is a creature that is brought up in the caressing fold of creation, gets his nourishment from the breast of production, and is connected on this level with life-less nature. But, on the level of origination, he is related to the command of Allah, to :His authority

His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it, “Be”, and it is ;((۳۶:۸۲

.(Our word for a thing when We intend it, is only that We say to it, “Be”, and it is (۱۶:۴۰

This much about genesis. As for the return journey, the path divides in two: the path .of happiness, and that of unhappiness

The path of happiness is the shortest route, leading the man to the sublime spiritual heights. It keeps raising his status and enhancing his rank until it takes him to the divine nearness. The path of unhappiness, on the other hand, is a long route that keeps demeaning and debasing him rendering him lowest

.of the low, until he reaches the divine presence

.(And Allah encompasses them on every side (۸۵:۲۰

;This subject has been fully explained under the verse

.(Guide us to the straight path (۱:۶

This was a short description of man's path. Details about his life in this world, and before and after it, will be given in their proper place. The verse under discussion is not concerned with those details; it makes only a passing reference to it as it has .some bearing on guidance and misguidance, happiness and unhappiness

He made them complete seven heavens: We shall write about the heavens in Chapter .۳۲ (as-Sajdah), God willing

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۳۰-۳۳

point

(۳۰) وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّکَ لِلْمَلائِکَهِ إِنِّی جَاعِلٌ فِی الأَرْضِ خَلِیفَهً قَالُواْ أَتَجْعَلُ فِیهَا مَن یُفْسِدُ فِیهَا وَیَسْفِکُ الدِّمَاء وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِکَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَکَ قَالَ إِنِّی أَعْلَمُ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

(۳۱) وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الأَسْمَاء کُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَی الْمَلائِکَهِ فَقَالَ أَنبِئُونِی بِأَسْمَاء هَؤُلاء إِن کُنتُمْ صَادِقِینَ

(۳۲) قَالُواْ سُبْحَانَکَ لاَ عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلاَّ مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّکَ أَنتَ الْعَلِیمُ الْحَکِیمُ

(۳۳) قَالَ یَا آدَمُ أَنبِئْهُم بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّکُمْ إِنِّی أَعْلَمُ غَیْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا کُنتُمْ تَکْتُمُونَ

And when your Lord said to the angels, “Verily I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent”; they said: “wilt thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood while we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness?” He said: “Surely I know .(what you do not know” (۳۰

And He taught Adam the names, all of them, then presented them to

.(the angels and He said: “Tell Me the names of those if you are right” (٣١

They said: “Glory be to Thee! We have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught .(us; surely Thou, Thou (alone), art the knowing, the Wise” (٣٢

He said: “O Adam! Inform them of their names. And when he had informed them of their names, He said: “Did I not say to you that I surely know the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth and (that) I know what you manifest and what you were .(hiding?” (٣٣

Commentary

The verses tell us why the man has been sent to this world, what is the significance of his appointment as the vicegerent of Allah in this earth, what are the characteristics and special features of this vicegerency. Unlike other Qur'anic stories, it has been told .in one place only, that is, in these verses

Qur’an: And when your Lord said: We shall explain in vol. IV, what the “speech” or .“saying” means when it is attributed to Allah, to angels and to the Satan

Qur’an: they said: “Wilt thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it . . . and extol Thy holiness?”: The angels heard the announcement, “I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent”, and at once arrived at the conclusion that the wouldbe vicegerent would make mischief in the earth and shed blood. Apparently they understood the .”ultimate behaviour of the said vicegerent from the words, “in the earth

A vicegerent appointed

in the earth would certainly be created from material components; he would necessarily be bestowed with two basic traits of desire and anger; the earth is a place of unceasing struggle and constant confrontation; its resources are limited, its opportunities finite; but the proposed vicegerent's desire would be unlimited, infinite. .The condition of the earth and earthly things was hardly reassuring

Its creatures were subjected to ever-continuing deterioration and disintegration; its good was always turning into bad; it was a place where an individual could not live without a group having similar characteristics and traits. Keeping all this in view, the angels at once understood that what Allah intended to create was not only an .individual, but a species

The members of that species would have to live together, cooperating with one another; that is to say, they would have to establish a society, a social order. And with .a venture like this, they were bound to cause mischief and to shed blood

On the other hand, they knew that vicegerency - setting one thing in place of another - was unthinkable unless the vicegerent were a true copy of his predecessor in all the .characteristics, traits and intrinsic abilities

The proposed earthly creature was to be made vicegerent of Allah in the earth. Allah has got for Himself the best names, the sublime attributes; His mercy and power are beyond the comprehension of His creatures; He, in His person, is untouched by any defect; and, in his actions, is free from all kinds

.of evil and disorder

How could an earthly vicegerent, with all his defects and deficiencies, represent the majesty and splendour of Allah in the earth? Well, could a lowly creature of earth be a ?mirror of divine beauty and sublimity

This was their question – and it was no more than a question. It was not a protest, not an objection; they actually wanted to know the truth. They later asserted their belief .that Allah was the Knowing, the Wise

They believed that what Allah intended to do was based on knowledge and wisdom; and their question was put in order to learn the underlying wisdom of the decision of :Allah. What their question – or, pleading – amounted to was as follows

Allah intends to appoint a vicegerent in the earth; in order that the said vicegerent should represent Allah by celebrating His praise and glorifying His holiness through his worthy presence. But his earthly nature would not let him do so; it would irresistibly .pull him towards mischief and wickedness

So far as the main purpose of this vicegerency – celebrating Allah's praise and glorifying His holiness – is concerned, we are already doing it. Therefore, we are Allah's de facto vicegerents; and if Allah wishes, He may bestow upon us this designation. What is the need, then, of a new creation to act as vicegerent of Allah in ?the earth

For the reply, Allah used a sentence, “Surely I know what you do not know”, and an action, “And He taught Adam the

."names, all of them

:The context shows that

First: The vicegerent was to get the vicegerency of Allah; he was not to become a successor of any earthly creature that had preceded him. If Allah had wanted the man to take the place of that previous creature, the reply, "And He taught Adam the names, all of them", would be quite irrelevant.

Assuming that man was given vicegerency of Allah, this prestige would not be restricted to the person of Adam only, his descendants too would be vicegerents of Allah in the earth. Adam was taught the names; in other words, this knowledge was ingrained in human being in such a manner that, since that first day, it has been constantly bearing newer, fresher and better fruits; whenever man gets a chance, he discovers new avenues of knowledge; and thus he always finds himself imbued with previously unknown potentialities that more often than not turn into real achievements. It is a never ending process; it is a wonder that will not cease, and ever-fresh insight that will never fail to astonish.

That this assumption is correct, and the whole mankind is vicegerent of Allah, is evident by the following verses:

And remember (O people of 'Ad!) when He made you successors of Nūh's people . . . (۷:۶۹);

Then We made you successors in the land after them . . . (۱۰:۱۴);

. . . and He makes you successors in the earth (۲۷:۶۲).

The word translated here as "successor" is the same that has been translated as "vicegerent"

.in the verse under discussion

Second: Allah did not say that the vicegerent-designate would not cause mischief and bloodshed; nor did He reject the plea of the angels that they celebrated His praise and extolled His glory. By this silence, He confirmed that the angels were right on both .counts. But then He made manifest one thing which the angels were not aware of

He showed them that there was a matter which they could not shoulder the responsibility of, while this proposed vicegerent could do so. Man was entrusted with a divine secret which the angels, in their nature, were unable to know or understand. And that divine gift would more than compensate the ensuing mischief and .bloodshed

Allah told them, first, that surely He knew what they did not know. Then He referred to the same reply by telling them: “Did I not say that I surely know the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth?” Looking at the intervening sentences it may easily be .”understood that the “unseen (secrets)” refer to “the names

It does not refer to Adam's knowledge of those names. The angels were unaware of even the existence of these “names”; it was not that they knew about the names but .were not sure whether Adam knew them or not

Had the angels been doubtful only about Adam's knowledge of the names, it would have been enough to tell Adam to inform the angels of the names in order that they .would have known that Adam knew

Instead, Allah

p: ۲۲۴

first asked them to tell Him “the names of those”. The angels had claimed the vicegerency of Allah for themselves, and had hinted that Adam was not fit for it; but the essential qualification for the vicegerency was the knowledge of the names; therefore, Allah asked both candidates about the names; the angels did not know .them, and Adam knew; it proved that he had the qualification while they lacked it

The question (about this knowledge) addressed to the angels ends with the clause, “if you are right”; it means that they had claimed a position, essential qualification of .which was this knowledge

Qur’an: And He taught Adam the names, all of them, then presented them to the :angels

The Arabic pronoun, “them”, used in “then presented them”, is made for rational beings, those who have life, sense and understanding. Obviously, the names (or, the named ones) were some living and sensible being who were hidden behind the curtain .”of the “unseen

It follows that the knowledge given to Adam of their names was something totally different from what we understand from the knowledge of names. Merely knowing the names (in the sense known to us) has no distinction; otherwise, the angels too would have become equal to Adam in this respect as soon as they heard those names .from Adam

Also, there would have been no distinction for Adam in such a knowledge. The angels could rightly complain to Allah that He taught those names to Adam, but kept them ((i.e. the angels

in dark; had He taught them too, they would have been equal to, if not better than, Adam! Understandably, such favouritism could not have silenced the angels. Surely, it .was something deeper then merely knowing all the names

It would not have been a convincing argument for Allah to teach Adam a dictionary and then put it as an evidence against the angels – the honoured servants who do not precede Him in speech and who act according to His commandment only – telling them to inform Him of the words which they had not been taught, and which the .mankind was to invent in future

Moreover, the only purpose of language is to convey the feelings and ideas to the hearer; but the angels do not need any language for this purpose; they convey and receive the ideas directly without the medium of words; their stage is far higher than .that of human beings in this respect

However, it is clear that the knowledge of the names which the angels got after hearing them from Adam was not the same as Adam had got by teaching of Allah – the inferior knowledge of the names they could grasp, but not the superior one which .qualified Adam for vicegerency of Allah

Adam deserved the vicegerency because he was given the knowledge of the names, and not because he informed the angels of those names. That is why they declared, .”“Glory be to Thee! We have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us

p: ۲۲۶

.They accepted that they did not possess that knowledge

The above discourse leads us to believe that Adam was taught the names of the named ones in such a way that he clearly knew their reality and recognized their substantial existence; it was not merely knowing the semantic value of a noun.

The named ones were substantial realities, the actual beings that were, at the same time, hidden behind the curtain of the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth. This especial knowledge could be learnt only by an earthly human being, but was quite incomprehensible by a heavenly angel. And this knowledge had an intrinsic bearing upon vicegerency.

“'al-Asma” (الأسماء = the names), in the sentences, “And He taught Adam the names”, is a plural with the definite article “al” (the) prefixed to it. Grammatically, it denotes generality, comprehensiveness; and it is followed by the emphatic, “all of them.”

Clearly, Adam was taught all the names of every named thing, without any restriction or limitation. As described earlier, the pronoun, “them”, in the clause, “then presented them to the angels”, shows that every name, that is, the named one, was a living being having knowledge and intellect; and at the same time, he was in the curtain of the unseen - the unseen of the heavens and the earth.

“The unseen of the heavens and the earth”: It is a genitive case. Somewhere else this phrase may mean the unseen parts of the heavens and the earth. But in this verse,

where Allah intends to demonstrate His perfect and comprehensive power, and to show the deficiency and incapability of the angels, it must mean a secret which is unseen to all the worlds, to all the heavens and the earth; an unseen beyond the .sphere of the universe

If you look at all the particulars of this verse – that "the names" denotes generality, that the named ones were alive and had knowledge, and that they were unseen to the heavens and the earth – you will agree that it perfectly fits on the theme of the ,verse ١٥:٢١

And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it and We do not send it down .but in a known measure

Whatever is called a thing – whatever is "named" a thing – Allah has its vast treasures, ever-lasting, never-ending, unmeasured by any measure, unlimited by any limit. .Measure and limit come to it when it is created and sent down

The vastness of these treasures is not of the same kind as the multiplicity of number, because a number, no matter how large, is by definition measured, limited and quantified. The said treasures are vast in their ranks and grades. (We shall further (.explain it in Chapter ١٥

The named ones who were presented before the angels were sublime beings, who were well-protected by Allah, hidden in curtains of the unseen. He sent them down to the universe with their blessings and benefactions, and created all that is in the heavens

and in the earth from their light and splendour. Although they had numerous identities, they were not different in their number or in their persons; whatever .difference there was, it was in their ranks and grades

Qur’an: and I know what you manifest and what you were hiding: The sentence stands face to face with the mention of the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth. Probably it refers to those things which are the parts of the heavens and the earth; and in this way both sentences together cover all unseen things – those which are beyond the sphere of the heavens and the earth together with those which are .within that sphere

Instead of saying “and what you hide”, Allah said, “and what you were hiding”. This changed style shows that there was something hidden especially in respect of Adam and his appointment as vicegerent. Probably it was the incident described in the next :verse

the angels) prostrated except Iblīs. He refused and he showed arrogance, and he) . . .“ .”was one of the unbelievers

It shows that Iblīs was an unbeliever before then, and that his refusal to prostrate had sprung from that disbelief, which he had kept hidden upto that moment. Obviously, the prostration of the angels and the refusal of Iblīs had happened after Allah had told them, “Surely I know what you do not know”, but before He said to them, “. . . I know what you manifest and what you were hiding” (i.e. the

unbelief kept secret by Iblīs). It also explains the reason why the former sentence was changed to, "I surely know the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth."

Tradition

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "The angels could not know what they said (Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood),if they had not (earlier) seen someone who had made mischief in it and shed blood." (at-Tafsīr, al-'Ayyashī)

The author says: This tradition may be pointing to an earlier creature that inhabited the earth before the mankind, as some other Tradition say. It is not against what we have said that they understood it from the very words of Allah: Verily, I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent; rather the tradition and our explanation are complementary.

The tradition, without putting it in the framework of our explanation, would show that the angels too, like Iblīs, had committed the folly of unauthorized analogy - a very objectionable practice.

Zurarah said: "I visited Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and he asked (me): 'What do you have of Shī'ah Tradition?' I said: 'I do have a large number of it; and I was thinking of kindling a fire to burn them in it.' He said: 'Hide it (somewhere), you will (naturally) forget what you are not familiar with.' " (Zurarah said):

"Then, I thought about the mankind (and asked him about them). He said: 'How did the angels get their knowledge when they said, Wilt Thou place in it such as shall

'?make mischief in it and shed blood

Zurarah further reports that whenever Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) mentioned this tradition, " he said: "It is a shattering blow against al-Qadariyyah (i. e. those who say that man is ".(completely independent of Allah in his actions

Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) further said: "Adam (a.s.) had, in the heaven, a friend from among the angels. When Adam got down from the heaven to the earth, the angel felt lonely; .he complained (of it) to Allah and sought His permission

Allah allowed him and he came down to him (Adam); he found him (Adam) sitting in a desolate region. When Adam saw him, he put his hand on his head and cried aloud." Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: "They narrate that (it was such a loud cry that) all the .creatures heard it

The angel told him: 'O Adam! I do not see but that you have disobeyed your Lord and put on yourself a burden beyond your strength. Do you know what Allah had told us about you, and (what) we had said in His reply?' (Adam) said: 'No.' (The angel) said: ."'Allah told us, "I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent

We said: "Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood?" Thus, He created you to place you in the earth. Could it be right for you to stay in the heaven?' " Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: "Allah in this way consoled Adam for three days." (.(ibid

The author says: The

tradition shows that the Garden of Adam was in the heaven. Other Tradition on this .subject will be given later

In the same book, Abū 'l-'Abbas is quoted as saying that he asked Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) about the words of Allah, And He taught Adam the names, all of them, (and enquired) as to what Allah had taught him. (The Imam) said: “The earths, the mountains, the canyons and the valleys.” Then he looked at the rug which he sat upon and said: “And ”.this rug is among the things which He taught him

It is reported in the same book that al-Fudayl ibn al-'Abbas asked Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) what were the names which Allah taught Adam. He replied: “The names of the valleys ”.and the vegetables and the trees and the mountains of the earth

The same book narrates from Dawūd ibn Sarhan al-'Attar that he said: “I was with Abū 'Abdillah (a. s.) ; he called for the table-spread and we took our meals. Then he :called for the washbowl and hand-towel. I said to him

May I be your ransom! The words of Allah: And He taught Adam the names, all of' them - was (this) wash-bowl and hand-towel among them?' He (a.s.) said: 'The mountain-passes and the valleys.' Saying this he pointed by his hand this and that ”.way

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “Verily, Allah taught Adam the names of His proofs, all of them; then He presented them - and they were the spirits - to the angels, and said: 'Tell

Me the names of these if you are right in your claims that you have more right, than '.(Adam, to the vicegerency in the earth because of your glorifying and extolling (Me

They said:'Glory be to Thee! We have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us; surely Thou, Thou (alone), art the Knowing, the Wise.' Allah, Blessed and High is He! said: 'O Adam! Inform them of their names.' When he informed them of their !names, they knew of their (i.e. those spirits) high rank before Allah, Great is His name

They realized that they (i.e. those spirits) were more deserving to be the vicegerents of Allah in His earth, and (to be) His proofs over His creatures. Then Allah removed them (the spirits) from their sight, and subjugated them with their (i.e. those spirits) ,obedience and love; and told them

Did I not say to you that I surely know the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the' (earth and (that) I know what you manifest and what you were hiding?'"(١

The author says: The meaning of this tradition may be understood from the commentary given earlier; and it may also be realized that there was no contradiction .between this tradition and the preceding ones

It was explained earlier that the verse ١٥:٢١ (And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it . . .) that every thing originally exists in the treasures of the unseen; the things that are with us came into being on descending

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Ma'ani 'l-akhbar -١

from there. The name given to a thing in this existence is in fact the name of that .which is hidden in the treasures of the unseen

You may say that Allah taught Adam every thing that was in His treasures of the unseen - unseen that was hidden from the heavens and the earth. The same idea may be conveyed in these words: Allah taught Adam the names of all things - the things that were unseen secrets hidden from the heavens and the earth. The sum .total of both statements is the same

the substance, of = الطّينه) It is not out of place here to point to the Tradition of at-tīnah :which a thing is made). Such a tradition, narrated in Biharu '۱-anwar, is as follows

Jabir ibn 'Abdillah said: "I said to the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.a.): 'What was the first thing which Allah created?' He said 'The light of your prophet, O Jabir! Allah created it, then created from it every good; then He caused it to stand before Him in the station of ."nearness", so long as Allah wished

Then He divided it into parts; and He created the Throne from one part, and the Chair from another part, and the bearers of the Throne and the occupiers of the Chair from yet another part; and He placed the fourth part in the station of love, as long as Allah .wished

Then He divided it into parts; and He created the Pen from one part, and the Tablet from

another part, and the Garden from yet another part; and He placed the fourth part in the station of fear, as long as Allah wished.

Then He divided it into portions, and He created the angels from one portion, and the sun from another portion, and the moon from yet another portion, and He placed the fourth portion in the station of hope, as long as Allah wished.

Then He divided it into portions, and He created the understanding from one portion, and the knowledge and forbearance from another portion, and the (divine) protection and help from yet other portion, and He placed the fourth portion in the station of modesty as long as Allah wished.

Then He looked at it with awe-inspiring eye, and that Light started perspiring, and one hundred and twenty-four thousand drops dropped from it; and Allah created from each drop the soul of a prophet and apostle. Then the souls of the prophets began breathing, and Allah created from their breasts the souls of (His) friends and the martyrs and the good ones.' "

The author says: There are numerous Tradition of the same type; and on deep pondering they support what we have written earlier; some of them will be discussed later on. You should not reject such Tradition outright, thinking that they were forged by the Sūfīs.

The wonders of the creation are unfathomable; the scientists and the philosophers have spent, and are spending, their lives in discovering some of its secrets; but every solved enigma brings in

.its wake a lot of fresh previously unthought of enigmas

Do not forget that this is the unfathomability of this physical world – the smallest in range, the narrowest in scope, the lowest in rank. How can we pass judgement about ?other worlds beyond this one – the worlds of light, spaciousness and abundance

Suratul Baqarah: Verse ۳۴

point

(۳۴) وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلائِكَةِ اسْجُدُواْ لآدَمَ فَسَجَدُواْ إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

And when We said to the angels: "Prostrate before Adam", then all prostrated except .(Iblīs. He refused and he showed arrogance and he was one of the unbelievers (۳۴

General Comment

It has been explained earlier that the preceding words, "and what you were hiding", show that there was a hidden thing that had, meanwhile, come into open. The last sentence of this verse too leads to the same conclusion. Instead of saying, "He refused and he showed arrogance, and he disbelieved", it says, ". . . he was one of the ."unbelievers

It was not that he became an unbeliever at that moment; he was an unbeliever long since, but had kept it a secret, and this event brought it into open. Also, it was mentioned that the event of the prostration of the angels must have happened between the divine words, "Surely I know what you do not know", and the words, ". . . I know what you manifest and what you were hiding". It may be asked: Why then has ?Allah put this verse after those words

Probably it has been done just to

create a link between the stories of creation of Adam and his being placed in the Paradise. The twelve verses (۲۸-۳۹) were revealed to describe how and when man was made vicegerent of Allah, how was he sent down to the earth, and what is to happen to him in this life - the happenings that will have a bearing on his lasting .happiness or unhappiness

For this theme, the event of prostration has not much importance - except as a connecting link. That is why it has been mentioned here only briefly without going into details. Perhaps, it is because of the same reason that the Qur'an has changed the pronouns referring to Allah from the third person (your Lord said) to the first (And .(when We said

The angels had not hidden anything from Allah; it was Iblīs who had done so. Then why did Allah ascribe this deed to all of them (you were hiding)? Allah in this talk used the same method which even the human beings have adopted for their own speeches; we ascribe the work of an individual to the whole group, if the doer is not .properly identified or if he tries to remain anonymous

Also, there may be another explanation for it. Apparently the first announcement, "I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent", had shown that the said vicegerent would have authority over the angels too. It may be inferred from the command .obliging them to prostrate before Adam

Probably on hearing that

first announcement some disturbing thought had come into their minds, as it had never occurred to them that any earthly creature could be given authority over everything including themselves. Some Tradition too point to it. In this context the .words, "what you were hiding", could easily be addressed to the angels

Commentary

Qur'an: "Prostrate before Adam": Apparently it shows that prostration, per se, may be done before other than Allah, if it is done in conformity with Allah's command, as a :(.mark of respect to that person. A similar case is found in the story of Yūsuf (a.s

And he raised his parents upon the throne and they (all) fell down in prostration before him, and he said: "O my father! this is the interpretation of my vision of old; my .(Lord has indeed made it to be true" (۱۲:۱۰۰

.This topic needs some clarification

It was explained in the chapter of The Opening what the worship means. The worshipper places himself in the position of servitude and performs what manifests .this status, what clearly shows that he accepts the mastership of his master

Those acts must be such as to show the master's mastership or the servant's servitude; for example, prostrating before the master, bowing down to him, standing .before him when he sits, walking behind him when he walks etc

The more apt an action is to show this status, the more reserved it becomes to the rites of the divine worship. Prostration is the most significant symbol of the master's status arid the servant's

low rank, because the man in this act falls down and puts his forehead on the ground. .For this reason, it has the strongest connection with the divine worship

However, prostration is not the same thing as worship. They have two different meanings, and worship is not a quidditative substance of prostration. A quidditative characteristic can never be separated from any being. But prostration may be done without any thought of reverence or worship – for example, just to make fun of .someone

Keeping this in view, it may safely be said that although the connection of prostration with divine worship is the strongest, that worship is not its quiddity. Therefore, prostration, per se, cannot be exclusively reserved for Allah. If there is any .impediment or obstruction, it should emanate from the sharī'ah or the reason

What the sharī'ah and the reason forbid is ascribing the prerogatives of the lordship to anyone other than Allah. But they do not forbid honouring someone or according .him respect when it is done without elevating him to godhead

The discourse given above was from purely academic point of view. But the religious good taste, conditioned as it is by rituals of worship, has strictly reserved the prostration for divine worship; it should not be done for anyone other than Allah; in .Islam, one is forbidden to prostrate before others even as a mark of respect

Apart from prostration, there is no proof – either from the Qur'an and tradition or from reason and logic – against according respect

and showing reverence to others than Allah, especially when it is done as a part of the love of Allah; examples may be given of revering and loving the good servants of Allah and paying respects to the graves of the friends of Allah or to the things attributed to them.

There is no reason whatsoever why such actions should be prohibited. (We shall deal with this subject in a more appropriate place, God willing.)

Tradition

Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: "When Allah created Adam and ordered the angels to prostrate before him, it came into the angels' mind: 'We never thought that Allah had created any creature more honourable than us; we are His neighbours, and we are the nearest of His creation to Him.'

Thereupon Allah said: 'Did I not say to you that I know what you manifest and what you were hiding?'- (it was) a reference to what they had mentioned concerning the affairs of the jinn, and had concealed what was in their own minds. So, the angels, who had said what they had said, took refuge with the Throne." (at-Tafsīr, al-'Ayyashī)

Another tradition of the same theme is narrated in the same book from 'Alī ibn al-Husayn (a.s.), the last part of which runs as follows: "When the angels realized that they had fallen into error, they took refuge with the Throne; and it was a group of the angels - and they were those who were around the Throne; it was not all the angels who had thought so)).

".So, they have taken refuge with the Throne till the Day of Resurrection . .

The author says: The theme of the two Tradition may be inferred from the talk of the angels: "We celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness"; and "Glory be to Thee! We have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us; surely Thou, Thou (alone), art ".the Knowing, the Wise

It will be explained later that the Throne means the divine knowledge, as the Tradition narrated from the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.) say. (Therefore, the angels' taking refuge with the Throne would refer to their confession that they knew only that which (.Allah had taught them and that only Allah was the Knowing, the Wise

According to some Tradition, the word "the unbelievers", (in the clause, "and he was one of the unbelievers") refers to the species, jinn, to which Iblīs belonged, and which :was created before man. Allah says

And certainly We created man of clay that gives forth sound, of black mud fashioned .(into shape. And the jinn We created before of intensely hot fire (۱۵:۲۶-۲۷

According to the above-mentioned Tradition, the attribution of hiding to the angels (what you were hiding) needs no explanation; the clause means exactly what it says; .the angels had actually hidden in their hearts the idea of their supremacy

A third, group of Tradition says that the said clause refers to Iblīs and his hidden thought that he would not make obeisance to Adam and would not prostrate before him if

.asked to do so

There is no contradiction between these various explanations, because all the meanings may be inferred from the Qur'anic verses. They are all true and based on .fact. Various Tradition throw light on various facets of the same fact

Abū Basīr said: “I said to Abū 'Abdillah (a. s.): 'Did the angels prostrate and put their foreheads on the earth?' He said: 'Yes, as an honour (bestowed on him) by Allah.' (”(Qisasu 'l-anbiya, ar-Rawandī

The Imam said: “Verily the prostration of the angels before Adam was in obedience to (Allah and for their love of Adam.” (Tuhafu '۱-'uqūl

Mūsa ibn Ja'far (peace be on them both) narrates through his forefathers that a Jew asked Amīru 'l-mu'minīn 'Alī (a.s.) about the miracles of the Prophet in comparison with the miracles of (other) prophets (in course of which) he said: “This is Adam before whom Allah ordered His angels to prostrate.” “Did He do any thing like it for ”?Muhammad

Alī (a. s.) said: “It was so. But Allah ordered His angels to prostrate before Adam; yet' their prostration was not a prostration of worship; (it was not) that they had worshipped Adam against Allah, Mighty and Great is He! It was rather as an .acknowledgement of Adam's superiority and a mercy of Allah towards him

And Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was given what was better than that. Verily Allah, Great and High is He!, blessed him in His omnipotence, and the angels, all of them, prayed for him, and the believers were obliged to pray for

(him. So this is the increase, O Jew! "(al-Ihtijaj

Allah created Adam, and he remained for forty years in (that) shape (i.e. a statue without life). And Iblīs, the cursed, used to pass by him and say: "Why have you been created?" al -'Alīm (i.e. al-Kazim - a.s.) said: "Then Iblīs said: 'If Allah ordered me to .prostrate before this, I would certainly disobey Him

Then Allah said to the angels, 'Prostrate before Adam'; all of them prostrated; but . . . ' Iblīs showed the envy that was in his heart and he refused to prostrate." (at-Tafsīr, al-(Qummī

Biharu 'l-anwar narrates, quoting from Qisasu 'l-anbiya', as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: "Iblīs was ordered to prostrate before Adam, and he said: 'O my Lord! By Thy honour! If Thou excusest me from prostrating before Adam, I would certainly worship Thee worship no one would ever have worshipped Thee in a like manner.' Allah, Great is His " '.glory!, said: 'I like to be worshipped according to My own pleasure

The Imam also said: "Verily Iblīs cried aloud four times: First, on the day he was cursed, and the day he was dropped down to the earth, and the day Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was sent (as prophet) after a (long) interval of the apostles, and when the source of the Book was sent down. And he snorted (in satisfaction) twice: when Adam ".ate from the tree and when he (Adam) was sent down from the Garden

:And he said about the words of Allah

so their nakedness appeared

:(unto them (٢٠:١٢١

".Their nakedness was not seen before, then it was uncovered"

".Also he said: "The tree from which Adam was forbidden (to eat) was the spikenard

The author says: The Tradition - and there are many - support what we have written .about prostration

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ٣٥-٣٩

point

(٣٥) وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلاَ مِنْهَا رَغَداً حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلاَ تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الْظَّالِمِينَ

(٣٦) فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُواْ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَى حِينٍ

(٣٧) فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِن رَّبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

(٣٨) قُلْنَا اهْبِطُواْ مِنْهَا جَمِيعاً فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُم مِّنِّي هُدًى فَمَن تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

(٣٩) وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَكَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا أُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

And We said: "O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat (you both) from it (freely) a plenteous (food) wherever you (two) wish and do not approach (you two) .(this tree, for then you (two) will be of the unjust" (٣٥

But the Satan made them both slip from it and drove them out of what they were in; and We said: "Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for .(you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time" (٣٦

Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord, so He returned to him mercifully; . (surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful (٣٧

We said: "Get down you there-from all together; and if there comes to you a guidance

from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall .(they grieve (۳۸

And (as to) those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are the inmates of the .(fire, in it they shall abide" (۳۹

Commentary

Qur'an: And We said: "O Adam! Dwell you and your wife. . . ":Although the story of the angels' prostration before Adam has been repeated several times in the Qur'an, that :of his placement in the Garden has been given in three places only

.(First: The verses given above, from Chapter ۲ (the Cow

:(Second: In Chapter ۷ (the Elevated Places

- And (We said): "O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden; so eat from where .(you desire, but do not go near this tree, for then you will be of the unjust" (۱۹
- But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to them that he might make manifest to them what was hidden from them of their nakedness, and he said: "Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that .(you may(not) become of the immortals" (۲۰
- .(And he swore to them both: "Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you" (۲۱
- Then he caused them to fall by deceit; so when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness became manifest to them, and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden; and their Lord called out to them: "Did I not forbid

.(you both from that tree and say to you that the Satan is your open enemy?" (۲۲

- They said: "Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, .(and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers" (۲۳

- He said: "Get down, some of you being the enemies of others, and there is for you in .(the earth an abode and a provision for a time" (۲۴

- He (also) said: "Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you .(be raised" (۲۵

:(Third: In Chapter ۲۰ (Ta-Ha

- And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not .(find in him any determination (۱۱۵

- And when We said to the angels: "Prostrate before Adam", they did prostrate, but .(Iblīs (did it not); he refused (۱۱۶

- So We said: "O Adam! surely this is an enemy to you and to your wife; therefore let ;(him not drive you both forth from the Garden so that you should be put to toil (۱۱۷

- Surely it is (ordained) for you that you shall not be hungry therein nor bare of ;(clothing (۱۱۸

- .(and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the heat of the sun" (۱۱۹

- But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to him; he said: "O Adam! shall I guide .(you to the tree of immortality and a kingdom which decays not?" (۱۲۰

- Then they both ate of it, so

their nakedness appeared unto them, and they both began to cover themselves with .(leaves of the Garden, and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray(۱۲۱

.(Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided (him) (۱۲۲ •

He said: "Get down you two therefrom, all (of you), one of you(is) enemy to another. • So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he .(shall not go astray nor be unhappy (۱۲۳

And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, • .(and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind" (۱۲۴

He shall say: "My Lord! why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one • (indeed?" (۱۲۵

He will say: "Even so: Our signs came to you, but you forgot them; even thus shall • .(you be forsaken this day" (۱۲۶

And thus do We recompense him who is extravagant and does not believe in the • signs of his Lord; and certainly the chastisement of the hereafter is severer and more .(lasting" (۱۲۷

The context, and particularly the opening words of the story, "Verily I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent", clearly show that it was for the earth that Adam was created; it was the original plan that he should live and die in the earth. Allah had temporarily placed the couple in the Garden to test them in order that their .nakedness might be uncovered to them

Also the context in

all three places shows that the order to the angels to prostrate before Adam, and then to Adam to stay in the Garden is a single, continuous, story. It all shows that Adam (a. s.) was created specifically for the earth, and the way to send him down was :through the Garden as mentioned in the Qur'an

It was shown that he was superior to the angels and, therefore, more qualified for the vicegerency of Allah; then they were told to prostrate before him, in acknowledgement of his superiority; then he was placed in the Garden but forbidden to go near a particular tree; so that on eating from it they should become aware of .their nakedness and then be sent down to the earth

It means that the last link in this chain was their becoming aware of their private parts - it was this factor which irrevocably showed that they were fit for this earth, ready literally means shame, disgrace, private part of the (السّوأه) ,"for this life. "as-Saw 'ah .body

In this story it has been used in the last meaning, as may be seen from the words, “and they both began to cover themselves with leaves of the Garden”. That is why we (."have translated it as “nakedness

However, their awareness of their pudenda proved that in addition to their spiritual qualities, they had also animal instincts and desires ingrained in them. It naturally made them dependent on nutrition and growth. Iblīs wanted them to become aware of their

.nakedness

Adam and his wife were given earthly, human existence and were at once placed in the Garden without any delay; they were not given time to perceive and understand their nakedness or its concomitants; they had not yet comprehended the life of this .earth and its necessities

When they were sent to the Garden their connection with the spiritual world, including the angels, was strong; their link with it was not weakened. It should be noted that Allah has said, "what was hidden from them"; He has not said, "what had been hidden from them"; it may be inferred from the expression used that their nakedness could not remain hidden for ever in this life; it was hidden for only a short period when they .were placed in the Garden

The uncovering of their nakedness with all its concomitants was a predetermined fact and it depended upon their eating from that tree. That is why Allah had told them: "therefore let him not drive you both forth from the Garden so that you should be put ."to toil"; thereafter, the Satan "drove them out of what they were in

It should not be overlooked that even when Allah pardoned them after their repentance, He did not return them to the Garden – they were sent down to the earth to live therein. If their eating of the tree, the uncovering of their private parts and the life of this world were not a confirmed divine plan, an irrevocable predetermined decree, they would have

been returned to their place in the Garden as soon as they were forgiven their .mistake

In short, it was the divine plan that they should spend sometime in the Garden to get them prepared for the life in this world; and their removal from the Garden, according to the causal relation decreed by Allah, depended on their eating from the tree and becoming aware of their nakedness, and it happened because they listened to the .whispering of the Satan

Allah says: "And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot". Which covenant does this verse allude to? Does it refer to the admonition, "and do not ?"approach (you two) this tree, for then you (two) will be of the unjust

Or to the warning, "surely this (i.e., the Satan) is an enemy to you and to your wife"? Or does it refer to the general covenant made with all human beings in general and with ?the prophets in particular

The first possibility is out of question altogether. Allah says: "But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to them . . . and he said: 'Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not become two angels or that you may (not) become of the " '. . . immortals

Obviously, when Adam and his wife committed the error and tasted of the tree they were aware of the prohibition – even the evil suggestion of the Satan had begun with a reference to it. And Allah says

in this verse that “We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination.” It, therefore, could not refer to that prohibition, .because Adam had not forgotten it at all

The second suggestion - that the covenant might refer to the warning against the Satan - is not so wide of mark; still it is not supported by apparent meaning of the verses. The said warning was given to both Adam and his wife, while this verse refers .to a covenant made especially with Adam

It leaves us with the last alternative that the covenant means the general covenant which was made with the whole mankind and more particularly with the prophets. This verse (about the covenant with Adam and his forgetting it) occurs at the beginning of the story in the chapter of Ta-Ha; and the story concludes with the words, “So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My .guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy

And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind. He shall say: 'My Lord! why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one indeed?' He will say: 'Even so: Our signs came to you, but you forgot them; even thus shall you be forsaken (literally: '”.forgotten) today

These concluding verses perfectly fit that opening one. To turn away from the remembrance of Allah

is not different from forgetting the covenant of Allah. Add to it the use of the same verb (you forgot them) in the next verse. All these references are perfectly compatible with the covenant made with the souls of the human beings about the Mastership of .Allah and their own servitude

That covenant obliged the man that he should never forget that Allah is his Lord, the Ruler and Master of his affairs; nor should he lose sight of the fact that he is a wholly owned slave of Allah; that he has no authority whatsoever over his benefit or harm; nor does he has any control over his life, death or resurrection; in short he owns .neither his person, his characteristics nor his actions

The error that stands opposite to this remembrance is forgetfulness - man forgets his Lord and His All-encompassing Mastership; he becomes engrossed in his own self, .getting bogged down more and more in the mire of this world's attractions

Look at this world's life, with all its diversity; and see how it spreads its tentacles in all directions. Note how it is shared by the believer and the unbeliever both. And then find out how the two groups respond to its joy and sorrow. How different is their respective attitude towards this life's success and failure, happiness and .unhappiness, content and discontent, relief and suffering

These factors affect the two groups - the believers and the unbelievers - in entirely different ways. The believer has the knowledge of Allah

and the unbeliever lacks this knowledge. And it causes all the differences in their .respective behaviour

Every man looks at this world; a world that is submerged in all types of misfortunes and disasters: a life followed by death, a health ruined by disease, a prosperity eaten away by poverty, a comfort destroyed by discomfort, a gain nullified by loss – this is, in .a nutshell, the life of this world

The believer knows that everything and every affair belongs to Allah; nothing is independent of God, the Lord. Every thing and every affair emanates from Him; and all that originates from Him is good and beautiful; nothing but beauty and splendour, .goodness and excellence, can come from Him

And because all things and all affairs issue forth from his Lord and Master, he thinks that all is elegant and fine; he dislikes nothing and fears nothing; everything in his eyes is likeable, except that which his Master tells him to dislike. He subjugates his likes and dislikes to those of his Master. In short, all his attention is fixed to the .pleasure of his Master

He knows that everything is the sole property of God; none else has any share in anything. That being the case, why should he worry how the Master manages His own .property? He does not think that he is competent to meddle in the affairs of his Lord

This submission to Allah creates a perfect tranquillity, a truly happy life, untarnished by unhappiness; a light without darkness, a joy

without sorrow, a benefit without harm, and a riches without want. It all happens .because he believes in Allah and in His mastership

On the other hand is the unbeliever who does not know Allah. By cutting himself off from the one and only Master, he has to bow his head before every creature. He believes that everything is independent in its actions - that it has a power of its own to .benefit or to harm, to do good or evil

Consequently, he remains in constant fear of everything; he is ever apprehensive of every real or imagined danger. He is always grieving for want has befallen him, longing for the opportunities he has missed. He feels nostalgia for the prestige or wealth that is gone; breaks his heart for the children, relatives or friends who have .left him

He is inextricably trapped by the attractions of the world; he relies on them and has trust in them; and when any thing goes wrong, he sinks into despair. Then as soon as he makes a virtue of necessity and is resigned to that misfortunate, a new calamity .overwhelms him

In this way, he is always driven from pillar to post, with a heavy heart and a gloomy ."countenance; "thus does Allah lay uncleanliness on those who do not believe

It can be seen, in the light of the above discourse, that forgetting the covenant and unhappiness of this world's life, both are interrelated - the later springs from the former. This fact becomes clearer

if we compare the wordings of the verse ۲۰:۱۲۳-۱۲۴ with those used in the verse under :discussion. The former says

So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, .blind

:And the same idea has been expressed in this verse in the following words

then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they . . . .grieve

It may be inferred from these verses that the forbidden tree was of such a nature that if one ate from it he would certainly be entangled in the troubles and misfortunes of this life - he would spend his life in this world, heedless of his own place, forgetting .his Lord

Probably Adam (a. s.) wanted to combine the fruit of that tree with the covenant that he had entered into with his Lord. But he could not succeed; the fruit had its effect, he forgot the covenant and fell into the troubles and toils of this world. Then he was .saved when he repented before Allah and Allah turned to him with mercy

literally (الرَّغَد) "Qur'an: and eat (you two) from it (freely) a plenteous (food) "ar-Raghad means happiness, well-being, good life and affluence arghada 'l -qawmu means, "the people left their cattle to graze wherever (أرغَدَ القومُ مواشيهم) mawashiyahum "it liked. "Qawmun raghad

means people (or women) having a life of plenty (نِساءٌ رَغَدٌ) "and "nisa'un raghad (قومٌ رَغَد) .and opulence

Qur'an: and do not approach (you two) this tree; The context shows that actual prohibition was of eating from it; but they were told not even to approach it; the prohibition was couched in these terms for emphasis. What was really forbidden is :seen from the verse

,(so when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness became manifest to them (۷:۲۲

and

. (they both ate of it, so their nakedness appeared unto them (۲۰:۱۲۱ . . .

is the nomen (الظالمين) "Qur'an: for then you (two) will be of the unjust: "az-Zalimīn injustice, to do wrong). It is not from az-zulmah (darkness), = الظُّلم) agentis of az-zulm as has been suggested by someone. Adam and his wife acknowledged their wrong- :doing, and the Qur'an quotes them as saying

Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have" .((not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers" (۷:۲۳

This clause has been changed in Chapter ۲۰ to "so that you should be put to toil"; and :the toil has further been explained in these words

Surely it is (ordained) for you that you shall not be hungry therein (i.e. in the Garden) nor bare of clothing; and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the .(heat of the sun (۲۰:۱۱۸-۱۱۹

Clearly, the injustice and wrong-doing, mentioned in the verse ۲:۲۵, was to bring in its wake the toil of

this world – hunger, thirst, nakedness and other discomforts. The injustice or wrong that they had done was against their own selves; it was neither a sin (as this term is used in the sharī'ah) nor an injustice against Allah.

It shows that the prohibition was in the nature of an advice pointing out to them what was good for their own comfort; it did not have the force of an ordained law. Adam and his wife did wrong to themselves, because their disregard to that divine advice caused their removal from the Garden.

When a man commits a sin (i.e. an offence, from the sharī'ah point of view), he is given a punishment. Then if he repents and his repentance is accepted, the punishment is completely waived off, and he is returned to his previous position as though he had not committed the sin at all.

If Adam and his wife were guilty of such a sin, they should have been returned to their place in the Garden soon after their repentance was accepted. But it was not done. It clearly shows that the prohibition did not have the force of an ordained law; it was only an advice.

Even so, neglecting it had its natural effect on both of them and they had to come out of the Garden. But this removal from the Garden was not a punishment for any sin or crime; it was the natural consequence of the wrong they had done against their own selves. (We shall write

(.again on this subject, God willing

Qur’an: But the Satan made them both slip from it: The Satan could have misled them by creating evil thoughts in their hearts, in the same way as he misleads other human beings. But many verses, in the three narratives quoted at the beginning of this commentary, show that the Satan had appeared before Adam and his wife, and had :talked to them face to face

.(So We said: “O Adam! surely this is an enemy to you and to your wife” (٢٠:١١٧

Allah had pointed out the Satan to Adam, not by any verbal description but by showing (.”to him the person of the said enemy. (Note the demonstrative pronoun, “this is

.(The Satan) said: “O Adam! Shall I guide you to the tree of immortality. . . “ (٢٠:١٢٠)

.The speaker, that is, the Satan, must have talked to Adam face to face

And he (i.e. the Satan) swore to them both: “Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you” .((٧:٢١

. Obviously, he was visible to Adam and his wife and swore during his talk with them

And their Lord called out to them: “Did I not forbid you both from that tree and say . . . (to you that the Satan is your open enemy?” (٧:٢٢

It indicates that the Satan was visible to Adam and his wife. If the Satan had misled them by creating evil thoughts into their minds without appearing before them, they could have said to Allah that they were not aware that

that thought was put into their minds by the Satan; that they mistook it to be their .own thought because the Satan had not appeared before them

They used to see and recognize the Satan. Likewise, other prophets - all of them covered by Allah's protection - used to see and recognize him if and when he came to them. Many Tradition mention such encounters in the stories of Nūh, Ibrahīm, Mūsa, 'Īsa, Yahya, Ayyūb, Isma'īl and Muhammad (may Allah bless him and his progeny as .(well as the prophets

:The above-quoted verses as well as the verse ۷:۲۰

". . . and he said: "Your Lord has not forbidden from this tree except that

also show that the Satan had visited then near that tree in the Garden. He entered the Garden, talked to them and put evil suggestion before them. He was able to do so .because the Garden was not the Garden of eternal abode

The Qur'an also says that Adam, his wife and the Satan all were removed from the :Garden together. (Of course, Allah had said to the Satan

.(Then get down from this, for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein" (۷:۱۳"

But the pronouns "this" and "therein" may refer to the angels or to the heaven. It may mean: Get down from the company of the angels; or, get down from the heaven as it (.is a place of honour

Qur'an: and We said: "Get down, some of you being the enemies of others. . . ": The second

person pronouns, used in this verse, are plural, which denote at least three persons. Clearly, it was addressed to Adam, his wife and the Satan. The Satan was turned out .(of the heaven and/or the company of the angels before (as described above

This verse combines in itself that previous order too; and manifests the firm decree of Allah establishing enmity between Iblīs on one side and Adam and his wife and their descendants on the other. It also promulgates another decree that they shall live in .the earth, die therein, and be raised again from it

It may safely be said that the whole human race (Adam together with his :descendants) is covered by the last mentioned decree

.(Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised (۷:۲۵

This verse comes at the end of the story (in Chapter ۷) which begins with the following :words

And certainly We created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels: .("Prostrate before Adam"... (۷:۱۱

In both verses plural pronouns have been used; and it is an indication that the creation and the decree to live and die in the earth includes more than two, that is, .other human beings too besides Adam and his wife

The story of Adam may have been used by Allah to represent the rise, fall and rise again of the wole mankind. Adam was the first representatives of humanity, and his life was a symbol, a miniature, of the human beings

.life-span in this world

The angels were told to prostrate before Adam, because he was the vicegerent of Allah in the earth. It has been mentioned earlier that this vicegerency was bestowed on the whole mankind. The angels prostrated before Adam, as he was the symbol of .humanity, the representative of his race

Adam and his wife were placed in the Garden and then were sent down from there because they had eaten of the forbidden tree. Every man may see his own face in this mirror. His soul, before coming to this world, enjoyed the sublime and lofty existence; his abode was spiritually near to his Lord - a place of joy and happiness, of splendour and light; in the company of purified companions and spiritual friends, near to Allah, .the Lord of the worlds

Then he opted for this transient life, and was at once entangled in the troubles and toils of this world; leaving that purified existence, he was attracted to this tedious and .odious life

Adam at once repented and prayed for the mercy of Allah. In the same way, man may return to Allah and consequently to the eternal abode of honour and bliss. But if he took the wrong turning, did not try to return to Allah, and, in short, followed his base desires, he would change the bounty of Allah into disbelief and ungratefulness, would !direct himself to the place of disgrace - to the hell; and how evil that resting place is

(Qur'an: Then Adam received (some

to receive) = (التَّلَقّی)"words from his Lord, so He returned to him mercifully: "at-Talaqqī signifies "to learn". It was this learning of the words that paved the way for the .repentance of Adam

literally means to return; generally it is used for repentance, (التـوبه) "at-Tawbah" because when a man repents, he returns to his Lord. This verb is at times ascribed to Allah (as in this verse), and signifies that Allah returns or restores the servant to His .grace and mercy

In other words, He accepts the plea of the servant and forgives his sins. At other times it is attributed to the servant; then it signifies the servant's return to Allah, that .is, his repentance from his sins

at-Tawbah (repentance) of man is flanked on both sides by two tawbahs (mercies) of Allah. Man can never do without the mercy of Allah. He needs mercy and help of Allah to turn away from sins; only then he may return to Allah, may repent from his sins; .then again the mercy of Allah comes forward, and his repentance is accepted

Therefore, an accepted repentance of man issues forth from the mercy of Allah, and :also ends on His mercy. The verse ۹:۱۱۸ clearly mentions this fact

.(then He returned to them (mercifully) so that they might return (i.e. might repent

What were the words which Adam received from his Lord? Some people think that it :refers to their invocation reported in Chapter ۷

They said: "Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive

.(us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers"(٧:٢٣

But this view is not supported by the sequence of the events. Adam and his wife had addressed that invocation before they were told to get down from the Garden (٧:٢٤); and it was after getting that order that he "received some words" from Allah, as is clear from the verse ٢:٣٦-٣٧. Therefore, "some words" cannot refer to that previously .uttered invocation

There may, however, be another explanation: When Allah announced to the angels that He was going to make a vicegerent in the earth, they said: "Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, while we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness?" Allah did not say that their accusation against the wouldbe .vicegerent was wrong; His only answer was that He taught Adam all the names

There must have been something deep, meaningful and relevant in this teaching of the names; otherwise, the angels could not be satisfied, their objection could not be answered. The names taught to Adam must have contained some such thing that would come to the rescue of man if he sinned, would save him from disgrace if he .erred

Probably, the words received at the time of repentance were related to the names .taught to him in the beginning

It cannot be denied that Adam (a.s.) did wrong to himself by placing himself in this world - a crossroads of happiness and unhappiness; had he been

ensnared by it he would have perished; but he chose to return to his original place of spiritual bliss and was saved; he had to undergo, in this process, untold miseries and .unbearable hardships

In any case, he put himself in so much trouble that he became "unjust" to himself. The question arises as to why Allah selected this hard way to send him from the Garden to the earth. The fact, however, remains that in this process he attained to such heights of eternal bliss and spiritual perfection as would have been impossible to reach .without coming down to the earth – and that too with a stigma of mistake

The events leading to his removal from the Garden and, later, to the acceptance of his repentance showed to him his true reality – how humble, dependent, deficient and servile he was; and at the same time he came to realize that every difficulty of this world leads to manifold ease in the next life; every unpleasantness here results in enhanced pleasantness there; every trouble in the obedience to Allah brings in its wake the pleasure of Allah and His unlimited reward; the process continues until the .servant reaches the sublime presence of his Lord

Adam knew, through his own experience, taste of many of the beautiful attributes of Allah: His forgiveness, turning mercifully to the servants, covering their mistakes, bestowing mercy on them, putting them in the shadow of His compassion and grace – these are some of the divine attributes

.which He has especially reserved for the sinners

Adam could not know and understand them without passing through the stages which .Allah had decreed for him

This, however, was his repentance; it made ordination of asharī'ah essential. It was necessary for Adam and his descendants to know which path they should take so as to reach their destination, the abode of bliss and happiness. His repentance brought him to the stage where promulgation of religion and ordination of the sharī'ah was .inevitable

:That is why Allah frequently mentions the repentance before the belief

Stand fast then (in the right path) as you are commanded, as also he who has turned ;((to Allah) with you. . . (۱۱:۱۱۲

And most surely I am most forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good. . .(.(۲۰:۸۲

.There are many such verses in the Qur'an

Qur'an: We said: "Get down you therefore all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And (as to) those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are ."the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide

This is the essence of religion ordained, for the first time, for Adam (a.s.) and his descendants. Allah has condensed the whole religion in these two sentences; nothing .has been added, nor can be added to it upto the Day of Resurrection

Ponder on this story and particularly the narrative of Chapter ۲۰. You will see that Allah had

issued two decrees in respect of Adam and his descendants. When he ate from the tree, it was decreed that he should get down to the earth and spend his life therein – a .life of trouble and toil

And when he repented, it was ordained that he and his descendants should be honoured with divine guidance. The first decree initiated the earthly life for him; the second, issued after his repentance, bestowed dignity and grace to that life, by .providing it with divine guidance

From then on, man's life is composed of two lives: A material, earthly life and a spiritual, heavenly one. It may be inferred from repetition of the order to "get down" in :this narrative

Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth" .(an abode and a provision for a time" (۲:۳۶

Get down you therefrom all together; and if there comes to you guidance from Me. ." .(." (۲:۳۸

Repentance of Adam (۲:۳۷) occurred between these two orders. The sequence shows that Adam had repented before their departing from the Garden, although he had slipped from his earlier position of honour. It may also be, inferred from the change in ,the styles of the following verses: Allah said to Adam, when placing him in the Garden

;(do not go near this tree" (۷:۱۹"

,but when they ate from it

.(their Lord called out to them: "Did I not forbid you both from that tree. . . " (۷:۲۲

Note the demonstrative pronoun, "this", (for

a nearer object) in the former speech, and “that” (for a farther one) in the latter. Also contrast the verb, “said”, (showing proximity) of the former with “called out” (showing distance) of the latter. All this together supports the above-given explanation that at the time of the second order Adam was still in the Garden but not in his earlier .honoured place

Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth“ .(an abode and a provision for a time” (۲:۳۶; ۷:۲۴

.(Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised” (۷:۲۵“

The verses indicate that the life on the earth was very different from that in the Garden. This life is firmly connected with the earth, full of difficulties and hardships. Man, in this life, is created from the earth, then after death is returned into it, and will, on the Day of Resurrection, be raised from it. This life is different from that of the Garden. It follows that Adam had lived a heavenly - and not earthly - life in the .Garden

This observation gives us a certainty that the Garden of Adam was in the heaven, .although it was not the Garden of eternal abode from which one is never turned out

.What is meant by “the heaven”? We shall, God willing explain it somewhere else

Now, we come to the mistake of Adam. The explanation given under various verses throws sufficient light on this subject. But

:the importance of the topic justifies its recapitulation in a systematic way

The verses obviously say that he had committed a mistake and disobeyed the divine command: ". . . for then you (two) will be of the unjust"; "and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray"; and they too acknowledged their error: "Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall ".certainly be of the losers

But on meditating on the verses, and particularly on the admonition not to eat of the tree, we come to a definite conclusion that the said prohibition was not in the nature of an authoritative command; it was rather like an advice to guide Adam to his good :and comfort. The following proof irresistibly leads us to this conclusion

First: Allah said in this, as well as in Chapter ۷, that eating of the tree would be an injustice, a wrong-doing (for then you two will be of the unjust). The same result has been described as "toil" (so that you should be put to toil); and the "toil" has been explained in the terms of worldly needs and troubles, because it was ordained "for you that you shall not be hungry therein (i.e., as long as you remained in the Garden) nor bare of clothing; and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the ."heat of the sun

It seems clear that it was to protect them from

these worldly troubles and toils that they were told not to go near that tree, The prohibition, therefore, was not more than an advice; certainly it was not an authoritative command. Going against an advice does not entail a sin, does not .involve rebellion against the adviser

The injustice, mentioned in this story, therefore, means their doing wrong against their own selves, putting themselves in this world's hardship and toil; but it cannot .mean the sin committed by a servant against his master

Second: When a servant repents, that is, returns to Allah, his Lord, and the Lord accepts that repentance, all the effects of the sin are erased, as though he had not .committed any sin at all

If the prohibition against eating from the tree had the force of an authoritative command, an ordained law, Adam and his wife should have been returned to their .place in the Garden as soon as their repentance was accepted. But they were not

It decisively proves that the prohibition was of advisory nature like telling someone not to put his hand in a fire; if he does not listen to the advice, his hand would certainly burn, and the subsequent apology would not unburn it, even if the apology was .accepted

Likewise, Adam and his wife disregarded the advice, and as a result of eating from the tree, had to go out of the Garden and live in the earth a life of trial and hardship. Their repentance could not take them back to the Garden

.as their coming to the earth was the natural and inevitable result of that action

The prohibition, in short, was no a law ordained by the Master – like the announcement that a man who neglects to pray would enter the Fire; or the one who disobeys the rules of the sharī'ah would be punished. If it were like such a command, the repentance would have rubbed out the effect of disobedience and they would .have been sent back to the Garden straight away

Third: We said: “Get down you therefrom all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And (as to) those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are ”.the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide

These verses have put in a nutshell all the detailed laws, rules, and regulations sent by Allah for the mankind, through His angels, books and apostles. And it was the first sharī'ah which Allah ordained for the world, the world of Adam and his descendants. It was ordained after the second order to “get down” – and the order to “get down” was .not a legislative, but a creative, command, resulting from his eating of the tree

It means that at the time when Adam partook of the tree, nosharī'ah was ordained yet, and no law was promulgated. Therefore, whatever Adam did was not a transgression against any law of theshari'ah, nor was

.there any sin or crime involved in acting against that advice

Question: The order to the angels and Iblīs to prostrate before Adam was an authoritative command, and it was given before the order to Adam not to go near that .tree. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that at that time there was no obligatory law

Reply: We are talking about Adam and his descendants, and not about the angels and Iblīs. It is irrelevant whether the angels and Iblīs were given a compulsory order .before Adam was placed in the Garden

Question: If the prohibition were of an advisory nature, Allah would not have ."described its disregard in the terms of "injustice", "disobedience", and "going astray

Reply: We have already explained that the "injustice" done by Adam and his wife was .against their own selves; it was not a sin against Allah

disobedience) literally means to resist, or to yield with difficulty. = العِصيان) "al-'Isyan" but it resisted, (= فع_َصى) The Arabs say: I broke it and it was broken; I broke it fa-'asa .or yielded to my pressure with difficulty

Not heeding an order is called al-'isyan, because one does not yield to that enjoinment or prohibition. This resistance may occur against an advice as much as against a compulsory order. The word in itself does not imply sinning; it all depends on .the nature of the order that was disregarded

Of course, nowadays we, the Muslims, use this word as synonymous to sinning. And now it has become a terminology of

theshari'ah (or of the Muslims), used for disobedience to an authoritative command. But this later transformance cannot effect its original or literal meaning for which it .was used in the Qur'an

“al-Ghawayah” (الغَوايَه = to go astray) literally means inability of a man to look after his interests; not managing one's affairs properly. This word by itself does not indicate committing a sin or crime. It is the context that determines its value. Its emphasis changes depending on whether the neglected order was an advice or an authoritative .command

Question: Then why did they repent? Why did they say, “and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers?”

Reply: at-Tawbah (repentance) means to turn to. And the word can be used in various .meanings, depending on context

A servant rebels against his master, and thereafter returns to him and asks for his forgiveness; the master, if he so wishes, pardons him, and gives him his previous rank .and position

A doctor tells a patient not to eat certain fruits, lest his illness be prolonged or the disease be complicated. The patient disregards the prohibition and, as a result, puts his life in danger. Now he feels embarrassed and repents before the doctor, asking for his forgiveness, begging him to prescribe for him a medicine to enable him to regain .his health and vigour

The doctor may tell him that now it will be necessary for him to undergo a long and difficult treatment, adding that if

he persevered in the prescribed regimen his health would be much better than .before

The significance of the other words used in the narrative, like forgiveness, mercy and .loss, may likewise change with the context

Tradition

Al-Qummī ('Alī) narrates, in his at-Tafsīr, from his father (Ibrahīm ibn Hashim) who narrates, from as-Sadiq (a.s.) (omitting the chain of intervening narrators, although it was fully described by his Shaykh). He said: "as-Sadiq (a. s.) was asked about the .Garden of Adam whether it was a garden of this world or one of the hereafter's

He (a.s.) said: 'It was a garden of this world, wherein the sun and the moon rose. Had it been a Garden of the hereafter, he would have not come out of it.' He (a.s.) further said: 'Allah placed him in the Garden and allowed him its freedom with exception of .the tree

It was done) because here was a creature of Allah who could not survive without) (some) enjoinment and prohibition, nor (could it continue) without food, cloth, shelter and marriage; nor could he know, without divine help, what was beneficial to him .from what was harmful

Then came to him Iblīs and told him: "If you (two) ate from this tree, which Allah has forbidden you, you (two) would become two angels and would abide in the Garden for ever; and if you (two) did not eat from it, Allah would turn you out from the Garden;" and he swore to them that he was a sincere adviser to them; as Allah

:quotes his words

Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not)become of the immortals. And he swore to them ".both: "Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you

Adam believed in his words, and they (i.e. Adam and his wife) ate from the tree; and they became as Allah says: their nakedness became manifest to them; what Allah had clothed them with of the (attires of the) Garden dropped away from them, and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden; and their Lord called :out to them

Did I not forbid you both from that tree and say to you that the Satan is your open ?enemy

:They said, as Allah quotes them

Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves; and if Thou forgive us not, and have" ".(not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers

:Thereupon Allah said to them

Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth" ".an abode and a provision for a time

He (the Imam) said: "that (time) is the Day of Resurrection". He further said: "Then"' Adam descended on the (hill of) as-Safa - and it got this name because Safīyu 'llah the sincere friend of Allah, i.e. Adam) came down on it; and Hawwa' (Eve) = صَفِيُّ الله) descended on the (hill of) al-Marwah - and it was named al-Mar-wah because al- the woman descended (المرءه) mar'ah

.on it. The Adam remained in prostration for forty days, weeping for the Garden

So Jibrīl (Gabriel) came to him and said: 'Did Allah not create you with His hand, and (did He not) breath into you from His spirit, and (did He not) made His angels prostrate before you?' He said: 'Certainly.' (Then Jibrīl said:) 'and He ordered you not to eat from the tree and you disobeyed Him?' Adam said: 'Iblīs swore to me falsely.'"

The author says: There are other Tradition too from Ahlu 'l-bayt (a. s.) to the effect that the Garden of Adam was of this world; although some of them are from the same .Ibrahīm ibn Hashim

The phrase, "a garden of this world", has been used in contrast to the Garden of everlasting abode. It indicates a state between this world and the hereafter. Adam's garden was not the Garden of everlasting abode, but neither was it a garden like is between one's death and the (البرزَخ) the state, place and time that of ours al-Barzakh .Day of Resurrection

The said Garden may be called a Garden of al-Barzakh, and it may well have been situated in this world. The sentences, "Adam descended on the (hill of) as-Safa", and "Hawwa' descended on the (hill of) al-Marwah", indicate that, before it, they were .somewhere above this world

The interpretation of "a time" with the "Day of Resurrection" is also revealing. Man remains in al-Barzakh after his death, and at the same time he remains in the earth. Many Qur'anic

.verses use these expressions interchangeably

:For example

He will say: “How many years did you tarry in the earth?” They will say: “We tarried a day or part of a day”, but ask those who keep account. He will say: “You did tarry but a .(little - had you but known (it)” (۲۳:۱۱۲-۱۱۴

And at the time when the Hour shall come, the guilty shall swear (that) they did not tarry but an hour; thus they used to utter lies. And those who are given knowledge and faith will say: “Certainly you tarried according to the decree of Allah till the Day of .(Resurrection, but you did not know” (۳۰:۵۵-۵۶

Apart from that, many Tradition of Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.) show that the Garden of Adam was in the heaven, and that he and his wife descended from the heaven. For the one who is familiar with the language of Tradition, it is not difficult to believe that the said Garden was in the heaven and that they had descended from the heaven to the earth, .even if they were created in the earth itself and live therein all along

These expressions are not any different from those which say that the Garden is in the heaven, and yet say that the grave is an orchard from the orchards of the Garden or a pit from the pits of the Fire. Many similar expressions are found in the Tradition. Any lingering doubt will be removed when we shall write about the heaven, God .willing

There is no

mention in the correct and reliable Tradition as to how Iblīs found his way to Adam and his wife, or as to what means he adopted for this purpose. Some Tradition mention the serpent and peacock as the two helpers of Iblīs in his endeavour to .mislead Adam and his wife; but they are extremely unreliable

Obviously, such Tradition were interpolated under the influence of Judaism. This story has been taken from the Jews, and to make this point clear, we are quoting it from the :Bible (King James version). The story is given in the book of Genesis

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of ground, and breathed into his nostrils" the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden .eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed

And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and .from thence it was parted, and became into four heads

The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is

Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the .third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth towards the east of Assyria

And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest .thereof thou shalt surely die

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call .them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof

And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of .the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him

And the Lord Gad caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her

.unto the man

And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they .were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God has made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent :said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her .husband with her; and he did eat

And the eyes of them both were opened, and

they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the .Lord God amongst the trees of the garden

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, ?whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast .done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat

And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; -upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of the life; And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt .bruise his heel

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou

shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it, bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. .And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of :the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever

Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the ".way of the tree of life

(Genesis, ch.۲: vs. ۷ to ch.۳: vs. ۲۴)

Compare the narrative of

the Qur'an with that of the Bible, then ponder on various Tradition narrated in the Shi'ah or Sunnī books; you will come to know many revealing differences. But we are .not going into it because it is beyond the scope of this book

Question: How could Iblīs enter the Garden and mislead Adam therein? The question :arises because

,i) the Garden is a place of cleanliness and purity

;(wherein there shall be nothing vain nor any sin (۵۲:۲۳

ii) The garden is in the heaven, and Iblīs was already turned out therefrom when he .refused to prostrate before Adam

.(Then get out of it, for surely you are driven away (۱۵:۳۴

.(Then get down from this, for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein (۷:۱۳

Reply: (i) The Qur'an disallows vain and sinful acts in the Garden of eternal abode (in which the believers shall be placed after resurrection) and the Garden of al-Barzakh wherein they are placed after death. But it is silent about the Garden of Adam, in which he was placed together with his wife before man was sent to this world and .given any authoritative law

Rather, it may be said that it shows not only possibility of disobedience therein, but .also its occurrence. Proof: This very disobedience of Adam and his wife

Moreover, vanity and sin are relative terms; and they do not occur until man comes .into this world, and is given some authoritative laws to follow

:ii) The argument may be replied as follows)

a. It cannot be definitely said that the

clauses, “get down of it” and “get down from this” were meant to turn Iblīs out of the heaven, because “the heaven” has not been mentioned in preceding sentences. The order, therefore, could mean, 'get out of the ranks of the angels', or 'get down from .'the honour and dignity given to thee

b. May be, the order to get down or to get out meant only that he could not live or stay in the heaven with the angels. If so, then it was not a prohibition against occasionally going or ascending thereto. This interpretation is supported by the verses which describe the Satans' occasional goings upto the heaven to eavesdrop the (conversations of the angels.(١

Also, it has been narrated that before the time of 'Īsa (a.s.), the Satans were going upto the seventh heaven; when he was born they were barred from the fourth heaven and above; then after the birth of the Prophet they were barred from all the .heavens

c. There is no mention in the Book of Allah that Iblīs had entered the Garden. Therefore, the question does not arise at all. It has, of course, been narrated in the Tradition; but they are not al-mutawatir;and possibly the narrators have described .the story in their own words, and not exactly as the Imam said

Utmost that may be put as evidence that Iblīs had entered the Garden is the verse: :and he (i.e. the Satan) said

Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may“

For example: And We have guarded it (i.e. the heaven) against every accursed - ١ .(Satan, but he who steals a hearing; so there follows him a visible flame (١٥:١٧-١٨

,(not become two angels. . . "(۷:۱۹

as he had used the pronoun, “this”, (“this tree”) which denotes nearness. But if it is ,taken to mean nearness in place, it would give the same meaning in Allah's command

.(do not go near this tree (۷:۱۸ . . .

Surely it, cannot be said that the pronoun indicates that Allah was in that place near (the tree.(۱)

Abdu 's-Salam al-Harawī(۲) said: “I said to ar-Rida (a.s.): 'O son of the Messenger of' Allah! tell me about the tree from which Adam and Hawwa' ate, what was it? Because people do have different views about it; some have narrated that it was a wheat-plant, and others have reported that it was the tree of envy.' He said: 'All this is true'.

I said: 'Then what do these explanations, with their differences, mean?' He said: 'O son of as-Salt! Verily the tree of the Garden bears (fruits of) many kinds; and it was a wheat-plant and (yet) it bore grapes; and it was not like a tree of this world. And when Allah raised the status of Adam by making the angels prostrate before him and by placing him in the Garden, he said:

Has Allah created any man superior than me?” And Allah knew what had came into“ his mind; so He called out to him: “Raise your head, O Adam! and look at the pillar of the Throne.” So, he looked at the pillar of the Throne and found written on it:

;There is no god except Allah“

۱- The first and third replies seem strange, to say the least. The author himself has said (while commenting on the phrase, ” . . . the Satan made them both slip from it”) that the order to “get down” or to “get out” may mean, “Get down from the company of the angels; or, get down from the heaven”. But here he rejects the second alternative altogether! The third reply is based on an unacceptable القيـاس مع الفارق analogy - that which overlooks the important differences between the two sides. If

the Satan is governed by time and space how does it imply that Allah too should be governed by them? Moreover, in the same commentary the author has proved on the strength of this same verse that "the Satan had visited them near that tree in the Garden. He entered the Garden . . . (and) Adam, his wife and the Satan all were removed from the Garden together." This leaves us with the second reply, which is doubtlessly without any flaw and is supported by the Qur'an. (tr.)

٢- That is, Abu 's-Salt Abdu 's-Salam ibn Salih al-Harawī.

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; 'Alī ibn Abī Talib is the Leader of the faithful, and his wife, Fatimah is the Chief of the women of the worlds, and al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the Chiefs of the youths of the people of the Garden." Adam said:

"O my Lord! who are they?" He, Mighty and Great is He said: "O Adam! they are (from) your off-springs; and they are better than you and all My creation; and if it were not (for) them, I would have not created you, nor the Garden, nor the fire, nor the heaven, nor the earth. So be careful not to look at them with envious eyes; otherwise, I will turn you out of My nearness."

But he looked at them with envious eyes and entertained the hope of (attaining to) their rank. So, the Satan got the better of him, until he ate from the forbidden tree; and got the better of Hawwa', and she looked at Fatimah with envious eyes until she too, like Adam, ate from the tree. Thereupon, Allah turned them out of His Garden, and got them down from His nearness to the earth.'"(١)

The author says: This matter has been described in many Tradition, some more detailed than this; others, more concise. In this tradition, the Imam has confirmed that the tree was the wheat-plant, and also that it was the tree of envy.

The former implies that the tree was not worthy of attention of the people of the Garden;

١- Uyūnu 'l-akhbar'

the later indicates that it was too lofty to come within the grasp of Adam and his wife (as a tradition says that it was the tree of the knowledge of Muhammad and his progeny).

Apparently, the two interpretations are totally different from each other, and the tradition seems a problematic one. But if you ponder on the covenant referred to earlier, you will see that both meanings are complementary, and not mutually exclusive.

Adam (a.s.) wanted to combine the pleasures of the Garden - a place of nearness to Allah, where it was necessary to always keep the covenant before one's eyes, and not to let one's attention divert to anyone or anything else - with the forbidden tree - which would bring all the world's troubles in its wake; but he failed in his endeavour, was sent down to the earth because he had been heedless of the said covenant and of its demands.

It was reserved for the Prophet to combine these two seemingly apposite factors; it was he who, for the first time, harmonized this world with the next, synchronized the matter with the spirit, and brought into being a whole man.

However, Allah again guided Adam aright, chose him for His vicegerency, and as a result of his repentance, raised him above the worldly desires and made him remember again the forgotten covenant.

"But he looked at them with envious eyes and entertained the hope of (attaining to) their rank": The second clause explains the first; Adam wanted that he

too should attain to that status; it was not that he was envious (i.e., had any ill will) .against them. Envy is a vice, while aspiring to raise one's status is not

:Now let us look at the following two Tradition

١. ath-Thumalī narrates from Abū Ja' far (a. s.) that he said: "Allah made a covenant with Adam that he should not go near the tree. But when the time came when, according to the knowledge of Allah, he was to eat of it, he forgot (the covenant) and .ate from it

:And that is (the meaning of) the words of Allah

And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not (find in him any determination."(١)

٢. al-'Ayyashī narrated in his at-Tafsīr from one of the two (i.e., the fifth or the sixth) Imams, that he was asked as to why Allah punished Adam for his forgetfulness. He said: "He had not forgotten; and how could he forget when he had remembered it :(very well) and (even) Iblīs had told him

Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become ".two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals

The way to harmonize these seemingly conflicting Tradition is clear if one applies to .them the foregoing explanation

Abū 's-Salt al-Harawī said: "al-Ma'mūn gathered for 'Alī ibn Mūsa ar-Rida (a.s.) people of various sects from among the Muslims, the Jews, the Christians, the Magians, the Sabaeans and all other religions. Nobody stood

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١- Kamalu 'd-dīn

for religious discussion with the Imam) but that he was forced to accept his (Imam's)) .arguments and was put to silence

Then stood before him 'Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm and said to him: 'Do you believe in sinlessness of the prophets? O son of the Messenger of Allah!' He said: 'Yes.' He ('Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm) said: 'Then what would you do with the words of '. . .?Allah: and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray

Then said our master, ar-Rida (a. s.): 'Woe unto you! O 'Alī! ! Have fear of Allah (in your heart) and do not ascribe indecencies to the prophets of Allah, and do not interpret by (!your own opinion the Book of Allah (Mighty and Great is He

:Verily Allah (Mighty and Great is He!) says

but none knows its interpretation except Allah and those who are firmly rooted in . . . .(knowledge (٣:٧

,As for the words of Allah

,and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray

the fact is that) Allah (Mighty and Great is He!) had created Adam (to be) His proof in) His earth and (to be) His vicegerent in His towns; He had not created him for the Garden; and the disobedience was (done) by Adam in the Garden, and not in the earth; (and it came to pass) so that the measures of the decree of Allah (Mighty and .Great is He) might be fulfilled

,So when he was sent down to the earth and was made (Allah's) proof and vicegerent

:he was protected (i.e. became sinless), as Allah says

Surely Allah chose Adam and Nūh and the descendants of Ibrahīm and the (descendants of 'Imran above all the worlds."' (٣:٣٣) (١

The author says: The sentence, "and the disobedience was . . . in the Garden", points to what we have already mentioned that there was no religious law ordained in the Garden; and that Adam (a.s.) even before his creation, was destined to live in the earth; and, therefore, the disobedience was of an advice, and not of an ordained law. In this context, there appears no reason why anyone should try (as someone has .done) to explain away this tradition in a round-about way

Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm said: "I was present in the court of al-Ma'mūn; and 'Alī' ibn Mūsa was there with him. And al-Ma'mūn said to him: 'O son of the Messenger of '?Allah! Is it not your belief that the prophets are sinless

He said: 'Yes.' (al-Ma'mūn) said: 'Then what is the meaning of the words of Allah, the High: and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray?' (The Imam) said: 'Verily Allah said to Adam: Dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat (you both) freely wherever you (two) wish and do not approach (you two) this tree,(pointing to a tree) .for then you (two) will be of the unjust

Allah did not say to him: Do not eat from this tree nor from another tree of its kind. And they did not eat

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al-Amalī, as-Sadūq -١

from it; they ate from another (similar) tree because the Satan whispered evil :suggestion to them and said

Your Lord has not forbidden you from this (i.e. the other similar) tree; He has only" forbidden you from approaching that one; and He has not forbidden you from that three except that you may not both become two angels or that you may not become of the immortals." And he swore to them both: "Most surely I am a sincere adviser to ".you

And Adam and Hawwa' had not seen before that anyone swearing falsely in the name of Allah; thus he caused them to fall by deceit and they ate from that (tree) because .they believed in his oath in the name of Allah

And it all happened before Adam was made a prophet, and it was not a big sin leading 'one to the fire; it was only a forgiven minor (sin) that is permissible to the prophets .before they begin receiving revelation

But when Allah chose him and made him prophet he became sinless, not committing any minor or major sin. Allah (Mighty and Great is He!) has said: Surely Allah chose Adam and Nūh and the descendants of Ibrahīm and the descendants of 'Imran above (all the worlds. . .' "('Uyūnu 'ا-akhbar

The author says: as-Sadūq (may Allah have mercy on him!) after narrating the :tradition in full, has commented as follows

Strange that 'Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm, in spite of his open hostility towards," and enmity and hatred of, Ahlu 'ا-bayt

".a.s.), should narrate this tradition)

This comment only looks at the belief of the sinlessness of the prophets which this tradition purportedly proves; but as-Sadūq (may Allah have mercy on him!) did not .look deep into its implications

The reported reply is not in accord with the well-known belief of the Imams of Ahlu '۱-bayt, that all the prophets were fully protected from all major and minor sins before .as well as after getting the prophethood

Moreover, the reply presumes that the verse does not mean what it apparently says. According to this tradition, the verse, "Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree :except that you may not both become two angels . . . ", should be read as follows

Your Lord has not forbidden you from this (i.e. the other similar) tree; He has only" forbidden you from approaching that one; and He has not forbidden you from that ". . . tree except that you may not both become two angels

Such deletions are against the norms of eloquence. The quoted speech of the Satan clearly shows that he was instigating them to eat from the very tree that was :forbidden, holding out to them the hope of becoming angels or immortals

Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become" two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals." "O Adam! shall I guide you "?to the tree of immortality and a kingdom which decays not

The narrator, that is, 'Alī ibn

Muhammad ibn al-Jahm, had himself been given the correct and complete answer in the court of al-Ma'mūn, as the preceding tradition shows; therefore, there is something wrong in this narration of his, although some parts may be somehow .interpreted correctly

As-Sadūq has narrated (through his chain) from al-Baqir (a.s.) , through his forefathers, from 'Alī (a.s.) that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: "Adam and Hawwa' stayed in the Garden, (till they were sent out of it) for seven hours according to the (counting of the) days of the world, until Allah sent them down on the same ".day

Abdullah ibn Sinan said: "Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) was asked - and I was present there:' 'How long did Adam and his wife stay in the Garden until their mistake removed them from it?' He said: 'Verily Allah breathed His spirit into Adam after the midday on Friday; then created his wife from his lowest rib; then He made His angels prostrate before .him and placed him in His Garden the same day

And by God! he did not stay therein but six hours of the same day until he disobeyed Allah. Thereupon, Allah removed them both from it after the sunset, and they were put into the courtyard of the Garden till the morning; then their nakedness became :manifest to them; and their Lord called out to them

Did ١ not forbid you both from that tree?" Adam felt ashamed and bowed (his head)" and said: "Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves and

we confess our sins; therefore, forgive us (our sins).” Allah said to them: “Get down you both from My heavens to the earth; because no sinner shall remain in My (nearness - neither in My Garden nor in My heavens. ” ' (at-Tafsīr, al-'Ayyashī

The author says: The tradition gives a new detail, that Adam and Hawwa' were removed first from the Garden to its courtyard and then from the courtyard to the :earth. There are some indications in the Qur'an to support this information

First: They were twice told to “get down” (vide vs. ۲:۳۶ and ۲:۳۸).It was a creative, and .not a legislative, order, and a creative order takes effect the instant it is given

If the first order told them to get down to the earth, there was no question of their not getting down to the earth at once; and, therefore, the second order would be superfluous. But in the light of this tradition the two commands would be perfectly in .order

Second: As mentioned in the commentary, this idea may be inferred from the changed verbs and pronouns of the verses. Allah describes in these words his talk with Adam :when he was being placed in the Garden

And We said: “O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden . . . and do not approach “ . . .(you two) this tree

But after they had eaten from the tree, their Lord called out to them: “Did I not forbid you both from that tree?” The verb, “We

said" of the former has been changed to "called out to them" in the latter; as the demonstrative pronoun, "this tree" (showing nearness) was replaced by "that tree" .((showing distance

These changes show that Adam had been removed, by the time of the second address, from his original place of nearness in the Garden to a distant place - which .the tradition describes as the courtyard

But this tradition says that Hawwa' was created from the lowest rib of Adam; it is a Biblical story which has been totally rejected by the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt, (as will be seen from the Tradition which will be quoted under the verses of the creation of Adam). This tradition, therefore, is unacceptable unless this expression is taken to mean that Hawwa' was created from the clay left over from the creation of Adam and .which was lying near his lowest rib

Whether he stayed in the Garden for six hours (as this tradition says) or seven (as the .former says) is not very important, because such things are mere approximation

It is reported from the fifth or the sixth Imam (peace be on them both) that he said about the verse, then Adam received (some) words from his Lord, that (the words :(were as follows

There is no god except Thee; Glory be to Thee, O Allah! and praise! I have committed" evil and been unjust to myself; therefore, forgive me (my sin) and Thou art the best of .the forgivers

There is no god except Thee; Glory

be to Thee, O Allah! and praise! I have done wrong and been unjust to myself; therefore, have mercy on me, and Thou art the best of the forgivers. There is no god except Thee; Glory to Thee, O Allah! and praise!

I have committed evil and been unjust to myself; therefore, have mercy on me, and Thou art the best of those who have mercy. There is no god except Thee; Glory be to Thee, O Allah! and praise! I have done wrong and been unjust to myself; therefore, forgive me (my sin) and turn to me (with mercy); surely Thou, Thou alone, art oft-returning (with mercy), the Merciful."(١)

The author says: This theme has been narrated also by as-Sadūq, al-'Ayyashī, al-Qummī and others; nearly the same thing has been narrated through the Sunnī chains; and it may possibly be inferred from the apparent meaning, of the verses.

al-Kulaynī has written in al-Kafī : "And another tradition says in respect of this verse: (Adam) had asked from (Allah) by the right of Muhammad and 'Alī and Fatimah and al-Hasan and al-Husayn."

The author says: This explanation too has been narrated by as-Sadūq, al-'Ayyashī, al-Qummī and others. A nearly similar tradition has been narrated through the Sunnī chains. it is reported in ad-Durru 'l-manthūr that the Prophet said: "When Adam committed the sin that he committed, he raised his head towards the heaven and said:

I beseach Thee, by the right of Muhammad, to forgive me.' Allah revealed to him (i.e.,' asked him through

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١- al-Kafī

revelation): 'And who is Muhammad?' He said: 'Blessed is Thy name! When Thou created me, I raised my head towards Thy Throne and saw written therein: There is .no god except Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah

Thus I knew that no one could be more honoured in Thy presence than him whose name Thou hadst placed with Thy name.' Thereupon, Allah revealed to him: 'O Adam! Verily he is the last of the prophets, from thy descendants; and if it were not for him, I " '.would have not created thee

The author says: Although these Tradition seem not to be in accord with the apparent meaning of the verse, on deeper consideration this explanation does not look so far-fetched. The sentence, "Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord", shows that he was taught those words by the Lord, and that he had got that knowledge before .his repentance

Also, it is known that Allah had taught him all the names. Allah told the angels that He :was going to make in the earth a vicegerent; they said

Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, while we" celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said: "Surely I know what you do not .know" . And He taught Adam the names, all of them

There must have been something in those names to wipe out every injustice, to erase every sin and to cure every spiritual and moral disease; otherwise, the objection of the

angels could not be answered - Allah did not say a single word to refute the angels' .assertion; all He did was to teach Adam all the names

It means that those names could cure all the ills of humanity; the angels understood it and surrendered to the knowledge and wisdom of Allah. We have earlier explained that those names were sublime creations, hidden from the heavens and the earth; they were intermediaries to convey the grace and bounties of Allah to His creation; .and no creature would be able to attain to its perfection without their assistance

At this stage, we may refer to some Tradition which say that Adam saw the figures of Muhammad and his Ahlu 'l-bayt, and also their light at the time he was taught the names; and the ones which mention that he saw them when Allah took out his .offspring from his back; and the others which describe his seeing them in the Garden

However, Allah has not identified those words, and has used it as a common noun, "(some) words"; nevertheless, the Qur'an has clearly used the expression, "word ", for :an individual being, as for example, in the verse ۳:۴۵

Allah gives you good news of a word from Him whose name is the Messiah, 'Īsa son . . . of Maryam . . .

Some exegetes have written that the "words", mentioned in this verse, refer to the :plea of Adam and his wife reported in Chapter ۷

They said: "Our Lord! We have been unjust

to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers. "

But the sequence of events does not support this view. The repentance of Adam, according to the narrative of Chapter ٢, had occurred after his coming to the earth. The verse (٢:٣٧) describing the repentance comes after the verse (٢:٣۶) that mentions his descent to the earth.(١)

But they had uttered that plea while they were still in the Garden, before coming down to the earth. The plea is given in verse ٧:٢٣; and the order to "get down" comes after that in verse ٧:٢۴. Apparently, this plea was in response to their admonition by Allah:

"Did I not forbid you both from that tree . . . ?"; they wanted to declare their servitude and to surrender themselves to Allah; acknowledging that all the authority was in the hands of Allah and He might do what He pleased; He was their Lord, and they had put themselves in danger of loss by being unjust to themselves.

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Verily, Mūsa asked his Lord to let him meet Adam; and he was joined with him (i.e., Adam). Mūsa said to him: 'O father! Did Allah not create you with His hand, and breathe into you of His spirit; and make the angels prostrate before you, and order you not to eat of the tree?

Then why did you disobey Him?' (Adam) said: 'O Mūsa! How long before my creation did you find

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١- It is not in accord with the author's earlier assertion that the verse ٢:٣۶ describes Adam's removal from the earlier-held place of honour to the courtyard of the Garden; after which he learned "some words" from Allah and repented (٢:٣٧); and it was later that he was sent down from the courtyard to the Garden (٢:٣٨). (tr)

my mistake (mentioned) in the Torah?' He said: 'Thirty thousand years before.' (Adam) said: 'That is it."' as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Thus refuted Adam the argument of Mūsa."(١)

The author says: as-Suyūtī has narrated in ad-Durru 'l-manthūrapproximately similar Tradition, through various chains, from the Prophet.

Al-Baqīr (a.s.) said: "By God, Allah had surely created Adam for the world, and He gave him place in the Garden, in order that he might disobey Him and thus He might return him to that for which He had created him." (٢)

The author says: A tradition of the same theme, narrated by al-'Ayyashī from as-Sadiq (a.s.), concerning an angel friend of Adam, has been quoted earlier.

A Syrian asked 'Alī (a.s.) as to which valley in the earth was the most honoured. He (a.s.) said: "The valley called Sarandīb wherein Adam descended from the heaven."(٣)

The author says: In contrast to it, there are numerous Tradition showing that he had descended at Mecca (and some of them have been quoted above). May be, he first came down to Sarandīb and then got down to Mecca.

It has been reported by at-Tabaranī, Abu 'sh-Shaykh (in hisal-'Azamah) and Ibn Marduwayh, from Abū Dharr, that he said: "I said: 'O Messenger of Allah! What do you say, was Adam a prophet?' He said: 'Yes. He was a prophet (and) an apostle; Allah talked to him before; He had told him: "O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden."

The author says: The Sunnīs have narrated almost similar Tradition through

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١- at-Tafsīr, al-Qummī

٢- 'llalu 'sh-shara' i'

٣- al-Ihtijaj

.various chains

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۴۰–۴۴

point

(۴۰) يا بَنِى إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِى أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُواْ بِعَهْدِى أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّاىَ فَارْهَبُونِ

(۴۱) وَآمِنُواْ بِمَا أَنزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلاَ تَكُونُواْ أَوَّلَ كَافِرٍ بِهِ وَلاَ تَشْتَرُواْ بِآيَاتِى ثَمَنًا قَلِيلاً وَإِيَّاىَ فَاتَّقُونِ

(۴۲) وَلاَ تَلْبِسُواْ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُواْ الْحَقَّ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

(۴۳) وَأَقِيمُواْ الصَّلاةَ وَآتُواْ الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُواْ مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ

(۴۴) أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنسَوْنَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

O children of Israel! Remember My bounties which I bestowed on you, and be faithful to (your) covenant with Me, I will fulfil (My) covenant with you; and of Me, Me alone, .(should you be afraid (۴۰

And believe in what I have sent down verifying that which is with you, and be not the first to deny it, neither take a mean price in exchange for My signs; and Me, Me alone, .(should you fear (۴۱

And do not mix up the truth with the falsehood, nor hide the truth while you know (it) .((۴۲

.(And keep up prayer and pay the zakdt and bow down with those who bow down (۴۳

What! do you enjoin men to be good and forget your own selves while you read the (Book? Have you then no sense? (۴۴

General Comment

Now begins the rebuking of the Jews that continues for more than a hundred verses. Allah reminds them of the bounties bestowed, of the honours given; contrasting it with their ingratitude and disobedience; showing how at every juncture they paid the favours of Allah with disregard of their covenant, open rebellion against divine

.commands and even with polytheism

The

p: ٣٠٠

series reminds them of twelve events of their history - like rescuing them from Pharaoh and his people by parting the river, drowning of Pharaoh and his army, the appointed rendezvous at the mount Sina'i, the Jews' starting calf-worship in Mūsa's absence, and Mūsa's order to them to kill themselves, their demand from Mūsa to show their Lord to them face to face, their death by lightning and then their arising from dead etc. - all of which shows how they were chosen to receive the especial .favours of Allah

But their ingratitude runs parallel to it. They repeatedly broke the covenants made with Allah, committed capital sins, hideous crimes and shameful deeds; more despic... able. Was their spiritual poverty and moral bankruptcy - in open defiance to their book and total disregard to the reason? It was all because their hearts were hardened, .their souls lost and their endeavours worthless

Commentary

covenant) literally means = العَهد) :Qur'an: . . . and be faithful to (your) covenant with Me guarding and"al-'Ahd" maintenance. By association it has come to mean covenant, .oath, testament, will, encounter, house, etc

fear) is opposite of = الرّهبه) "Qur'an: . . . and of Me, . . . should you be afraid: "ar-Rah-bah .(desire =الرغبه) ar-raghbah

Qur'an: . . . and be not the first to deny it: That is, first among the people of the book, or first among your own people. This firstness is not all-inclusive, because the .disbelievers of Mecca had rejected the Message before the Jews

point

(۴۵) وَاسْتَعِينُواْ بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلاَةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلاَّ عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ

(۴۶) الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلاَقُو رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

And seek assistance through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing, except for the humble ones (۴۵),

who know that they shall meet their Lord and that they shall return to Him (۴۶).

Commentary

Qur'an: And seek assistance through patience and prayer: Man seeks assistance in such affairs and tasks as he cannot manage alone, and in hardships and difficulties which he cannot overcome himself. In reality there is no helper except Allah.

Man can, therefore, manage all his affairs and overcome all his difficulties by courage and steadfastness (i.e. by patience) and by looking towards Allah (i.e. by prayer).

These two factors are the best way to get assistance: patience makes even the great misfortunes look trivial, and putting all his confidence in Allah awakens the spirit of faith; and thus man comes to realize that the cause which he is relying upon can never fail to produce the desired effect.

Qur'an: and most surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones: The pronoun, it, refers to the "prayer". It is difficult to relate it to "seeking the assistance", because it will then cover patience too, and the word "the humble ones" will not look appropriate - humbleness does not fit very much with patience.

The word used here for humbleness is "khushū" (الخشوع); "khudu" (الخضوع) too has the same meaning but with one difference: while the latter shows itself in the

.limbs of the body, the former refers to the inner feeling

Qur’an: who know that they shall meet their Lord . . .: The word used in this verse for "knowing" is "yazunnūn" (يظنون);

it literally means "they think". But the context, that is, the belief in the hereafter, demands a firm conviction that would leave no room for any doubt or supposition. Allah says:

(and they are sure of the hereafter (۲:۴).

Or, may be, Allah, by using this word, makes us realize that even an elementary idea of the hereafter is sufficient to create in a man humility and humbleness before his Lord. Many a knowledge comes to man in stages:

(۱) first he becomes aware of an idea;

(۲) then he has some doubts about its correctness;

(۳) then he becomes inclined to accept it;

(۴) then gradually the possibility of his accepting the opposite view vanishes completely and he becomes firmly convinced of the truth of that idea – and this firm conviction is called knowledge.

If such knowledge is concerned with some frightening affair, then his worry and disquiet will begin as soon as he reaches the third stage when he is only inclined to accept it – is only "thinking" that probably it may be true.

This Qur'anic expression, in other words, says that man, for showing humbleness before Allah, needs only to be aware of the idea that there is a Lord Whom he may return to after his death. In this context only a strong supposition should be enough

to make him desist from disobeying his Lord; it would not be necessary, for this .purpose, to reach the stage of firm knowledge

:From this point of view, the verse looks almost similar to the verse

therefore, whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not join . . . .(any one in the worship of his Lord (۱۸:۱۱۰

The above discourse is based on the assumption that the words, “they shall meet their Lord . . .”, refer to the Day of Resurrection. But if they are interpreted in, another way (as we shall describe in Chapter ۷), there should be no difficulty at all in its .explanation

Tradition

as-Sadiq (a. s.) said: “Whenever 'Alī (a.s.) faced a difficulty, he used to stand up for the prayer and then recite this verse: and seek assistance through patience and (prayer.”(۱

The same Imam said about this verse: “The patience means fasting.” Also he said: “When a man is confronted by a hard misfortune, he should fast. Surely Allah says: (and seek assistance through patience, that is, fast.”(۲

The author says: al-'Ayyashī too has narrated the theme of these two Tradition in his .at-Tafsīr. Interpretation of “patience” as fast is based on the “flow” of the Qur'an

Abu 'l-Hasan (a.s.) said about this verse: “The patience means fast; when a man is visited by a hardship or misfortune, he should fast; surely Allah says: And seek assistance through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing except for .the humble ones

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۱- al-Kafī

۲- al-Kafī

And the humble one is he who shows humility in his prayer, turning all his attention to it; and it means the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and the Leader of the faithful ((a.s.).”(۱)

The author says: The Imam has inferred from this verse the desirability of fasting and praying when one is facing any hardship or turmoil; and likewise, the desirability of seeking the divine help through the medium of the Prophet and 'Alī (a.s.) at that time. In this way, the tradition interprets the fast and the prayer as the Prophet and 'Alī .(.(a.s

Alī (a.s.) said about the verse, who know that they shall meet their Lord . . . : Allah says' (الظن) that they are sure that they would be resurrected. And the supposition az-zann (.means certainty. (ibid

The author says: as-Sadūq also has narrated this tradition, al-Baqīr (a.s.) said that this verse was revealed about 'Alī, 'Uthman ibn Maz'ūn, 'Ammar ibn Yasir and (some of) .(their friends(۲

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۴۷-۴۸

point

(۴۷) يَا بَنِى إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِى أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّى فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

(۴۸) وَاتَّقُواْ يَوْماً لاَّ تَجْزِى نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلاَ يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

O Children of Israel! Call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you and that I made .(you excel the nation (۴۷

And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another in the least; neither shall intercession on its behalf be accepted, nor shall any compensation be taken from it, nor

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۱- al-'Ayyashī

al-Manaqib, Ibn Shahrashūb -۲

.(shall they be helped (۴۸

Commentary

Qur'an: And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another in :the least

The temporal power and authority, with all its various systems and varying conditions, is based on a necessity of life – the only justification of this institution is that it fulfils .this need in the framework of the prevailing factors of the society

It some times exchanges a commodity for another, gives up a benefit for another, substitutes an order with another – without any hard and fast criterion to regulate .such dispensations. The same phenomenon is observed in their judiciary

Logically, a crime must be recompensed with punishment. Yet some times the judge, because of some extraneous reasons, decides not to punish the criminal. Some times the criminal rouses in the judge an overwhelming feeling of pity by his passionate appeal for mercy. Or he wins him over by bribe which induces him to deliver an unjust .judgement

Or an influential man intercedes with the judge on behalf of the said criminal and the judge cannot ignore that intercession. Or, the said criminal becomes a state witness leading to the conviction of even greater criminals, and is himself, thus, released .without any punishment

Or his tribe or colleagues get him freed from the clutches of the authorities. Whatever the cause may be, it is a well-established custom in the worldly governments and .human societies to let the wrong-doers go free at times

The ancient tribes and the idol-worshippers believed that the

life hereafter was an extension of this one; that the customs of this world were valid for that one too, and that the next world was permeated by the same actions and .reactions which prevailed in this one

Thus they offered sacrifices and offerings to their deities seeking forgiveness for their sins or assistance in their needs; the offerings were supposed to intercede on their behalf. Some times a sin was expiated or help was sought by offering even a human .sacrifice

They carried this idea of continuation of the life so far as to bury with a man all types of necessities of life, not forgetting his ornaments and arms, in order that he might use them on his onward journey; some times even his concubines and soldiers were .buried alive with him to keep him company

You may see a lot of such finds in archaeological museums around the world. Some such ideas have persisted even among the Muslims - with all their diverse cultures .and languages, albeit in modified forms

The Qur'an has rejected all such superstitious beliefs and baseless ideas in no :uncertain terms

• . . . and the command on that day shall be entirely Allah's (۸۲:۱۹).

• . . . and they see the chastisement and their ties are cut asunder (۲:۱۶۶).

• And certainly you have come to Us alone as We created you at first, and you have left behind your backs the things which We gave you, and We do not see with you your intercessors about whom

you asserted that they were (Allah's) associates in respect to you; certainly the ties between you are now cut off and what you asserted is gone from you (۶:۹۴).

• There shall every soul become acquainted with what is sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true Master and what they did fabricate shall escape from them (۱۰:۳۰).

There are many similar verses; and they show that the life hereafter is cut off from the natural causes which govern this life, and is quite separate from material connections. Once this principle is understood all the above-mentioned myths would automatically be cleared away. But the Qur'an is not content with this general declaration; it refutes each and every myth and superstition described above:

• And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another in the least; neither shall intercession on its behalf be accepted, nor shall any compensation be taken from it, nor shall they be helped (۱۲:۴۸).

• . . . before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession (۲:۲۵۴).

• The day on which a friend shall not avail (his) friend aught . . .(۴۴:۴۱).

• . . . there shall be no saviour for you from Allah . . . (۴۰:۳۳).

• What is the matter with you that you do not help each other? Nay! on this day they are submissive (۳۷:۲۵- ۲۶).

• And they worship beside Allah what can neither harm them nor profit them, and

they say: “These are our intercessors with Allah.” Say: “Do you (presume to) inform Allah of what He knows not in the heavens and the earth?” Glory be to Him, and supremely exalted is He above what they set up with Him. (۱۰:۱۸).

- the unjust shall not have any friend nor any intercessors who should be obeyed . . . ((۴۰:۱۸).

- So we have no intercessors, nor a true-friend (۲۶:۱۰۰-۱۰۱).

There are many other verses of the same theme, all rejecting the intercession on the Day of Resurrection. On the other hand, the Qur'an does not totally reject the intercession; rather it confirms it to a certain extent. For example, it says:

- Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods and He is firmly established on the throne; you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessors; will you not then mind? (۳۲:۴)

- . . . there is no guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him (۶:۵۱).

- Say: 'Allah's is the intercession altogether” (۳۹:۴۴).

- . . . whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them (۲:۲۵۵).

- Surely your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods; and He is firmly established on the throne, regulating the affair; there is no intercessor except after His permission (۱۰:۳).

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And they say: “The Beneficent God had taken to Himself a son.” Glory be to Him! Nay! they are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not intercede except for whom He approves, and for fear of Him they tremble (٢١:٢۶-٢٨).

- And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth, and they know (him) (۴٣:٨۶).

- They shall have no authority for intercession, save he who has made a covenant with the Beneficent God (١٩:٨٧).

- On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, while they do not comprehend Him in knowledge (٢٠:١٠٩-١١٠).

- And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits (٣۴:٢٣).

- And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at all except after Allah has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses (۵٣:٢۶).

Some of these verses (like the first three) say that intercession is reserved for Allah, while the rest declare that others too may intercede with Allah's permission. In any case, all of them confirm the intercession per se. How are these verses related to the preceding ones which totally reject intercession?

It is exactly

the same relation that exists between the verses that say that the knowledge of unseen is reserved to Allah and those which declare that others too may have that :knowledge with the permission of Allah. As Allah says

- .(Say: "No one in the heaven and the earth knows the unseen but Allah" (۲۷:۶۵

- .(And with Him are the keys of the unseen, does not know it any except He (۶:۵۹

- The Knower of the unseen! so He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him .(whom He chooses of an apostle (۷۲:۲۷

The same is the case with various verses on the subjects of creating, sustaining, giving death, causity, command, authority and similar things. Some verses reserve them for Allah; while some say that others too may do these things. It is a well-known style of the Qur'an: first it rejects the idea that anyone other than Allah has any virtue or perfection; thereafter it confirms the same virtue or perfection for others .depending on the permission and pleasure of Allah

When read together, the verses show that nobody has any virtue by his own power and right; whatever excellence there may be, he has got it because Allah has given it to him. Allah puts much emphasis to this fact; He attaches the proviso of His will even :for those things which are firmly decreed by Him. For example

So as to those who are unhappy, they shall be in the fire; for them shall be sighing and groaning in

it; abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord .please; surely your Lord is the(mighty) doer of what He intends

And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please; a gift which shall .(never be cut off (۱۱:۱۰۶-۱۰۸

Note that abiding for ever is made dependent on the pleasure of Allah, even in case of the garden, although it is a gift which shall never be cut off. It emphasizes the fact that even when Allah firmly decrees a thing, it does not pass out of His control or ;authority

.(surely your Lord is (mighty) doer of what He intends (۱۱:۱۰۷

When Allah gives a thing, it does not go out of His total possession. When He denies !some thing to someone, it is not done to protect Himself against any need or poverty

In short, the verses that reject intercession - albeit talking about the Day of Resurrection - do so in the context of intercession independent of Allah's authority; while the ones proving it, prove it basically for Allah and then, depending on His .pleasure, for others

.Thus the intercession is proved for other than Allah with His permission

Now we should see what is the meaning of intercession? Who may intercede? On ?behalf of whom? And when? How is it related to the divine forgiveness

?What is the meaning of intercession .۱

(الشّفع) "'intercession) is derived from "ash-shaf = الشّفاعه) "ash-Shafa 'ah"

which means “even” as opposed to odd – the interceder adds his own recommendation to the plea of the petitioner; in this way the number of pleaders becomes even, and the weak plea of the petitioner is strengthened by the prestige of .the intercessor

We are accustomed in our social and communal life to seek others' intercession and help for fulfilling our needs. We resort to it to get an advantage or to ward off a disadvantage. Here we are not talking about an advantage or a disadvantage, a benefit or a harm that is caused by natural causes, like hunger and thirst, heat or cold, illness or health; because in such cases we get what we want through its natural .remedies, like eating and drinking, wearing clothes, getting treatment and so on

What we are talking here about is the benefit and harm, punishment and reward resulting from the social laws made by civil authorities. Rising from the very relationship of mastership-and-servitude – and for that matter, between every ruler and ruled – there are some commandments, orders and prohibitions; one who follows and obeys them is praised and rewarded, and the one who disobeys is condemned .and punished; that reward or punishment may be either material or spiritual

When a master orders his servant to do or not to do a thing, and the servant obeys him he gets its reward; and if he disobeys he is punished. Whenever a rule is made, the punishment for its infringement is laid down

.too. This is the foundation which all the authorities are built upon

When a man wants to get a material or spiritual benefit but is not suitably qualified for it; or when he desires to ward off a harm which is coming to him because of his disobedience, but has no shield to protect himself, then comes the time for .intercession

In other words, when he wants to get a reward without doing his task, or to save himself from punishment without performing his duty, then he looks for someone to intercede on his behalf. But intercession is effective only if the person for whom one intercedes is otherwise qualified to get the reward and has already established a .relationship with the authority

If an ignorant person desires appointment to a prestigious academic post, no intercession can do him any good; nor can it avail in case of a rebellious traitor who shows no remorse for his misdeeds and does not submit to the lawful authorities. It clearly shows that intercession works as a supplement to the cause; it is not an .independent cause

The effect of an intercessor's words depends on one or the other factor which may have some influence upon the concerned authority; in other words, intercession must have a solid ground to stand upon. The intercessor endeavours to find a way to the heart of the authority concerned, in order that the said authority may give the reward to, or waive the punishment of, the person who is the subject

.of intercession

An intercessor does not ask the master to nullify his mastership or to release the servant from his servitude; nor does he plead with him to refrain from laying down rules and regulations for his servants or to abrogate his commandments (either generally or especially in that one case), in order to save the wrong-doer from the due consequences; nor does he ask him to discard the canon of reward and punishment, .((either generally or in that particular case

In short, intercession can interfere with neither the institution of mastership and ser… vantship nor the master's authority to lay down the rules; nor can it effect the system of reward and punishment. These three factors are beyond the jurisdiction of .intercession

What an intercessor does is this: He accepts the inviolability of the above-mentioned three aspects. Then he looks at one or more of the following factors and builds his :intercession on that basis

a. He appeals to such attributes of the master as give rise to forgiveness, e.g., his .nobility, magnanimity and generosity

b. He draws attention to such characteristics of the servant as justify mercy and .pardon, e.g., his wretchedness, poverty, low status and misery

.c. He puts at stake his own prestige and honour in the eyes of the master

Thus, the import of intercession is like this: I cannot and do not say that you should forget your mastership over your servant or abrogate your commandment or nullify .the system of reward and punishment

What I ask of you is to forgive this

defaulting servant of yours because you are magnanimous and generous, and because no harm would come to you if you forgive his sins; and/or because your servant is a wretched creature of low status and steeped in misery; and it is befitting of a master like you to ignore the faults of a slave like him; and/or because you have bestowed on me a high prestige, and I implore you to forgive and pardon him in .honour of my intercession

The intercessor, in this way, bestows precedence on the factors of forgiveness and pardon over those of legislation and recompense. He removes the case from the latter's jurisdiction putting it under former's influence. As a result of this shift, the .consequences of legislation (reward and punishment) do not remain applicable

The effect of intercession is, therefore, based on shifting the case from the jurisdiction of reward and punishment to that of pardon and forgiveness; it is not a .(confrontation between one cause (divine legislation) and the other (intercession

By now it should have been clear that intercession too is one of the causes; it is the .intermediate cause that connects a distant cause to its desired effect

:Allah is the ultimate Cause. This causality shows itself in two ways

First: In creation. Every cause begins from Him and ends up to Him; He is the first and the final Cause. He is the real Creator and Originator. All other causes are mere .channels to carry His boundless mercy and limitless bounty to His creatures

Second: In

legislation. He, in His mercy, established a contact with His creatures; He laid down the religion, sent down His commandments, and prescribed suitable reward and appropriate punishment for His obedient and disobedient servants; He sent prophets and apostles to bring us good tidings and to warn us of the consequences of .transgression

The prophets and apostles conveyed to us His message in the best possible way. Thus :His proof over us was complete

and the word of your Lord has been accomplished with truth and justice, there is none .(to change His words. . . (۶:۱۱۵

.Both aspects of causality of Allah may be, and in fact are, related to intercession

۱. Intercession in creation: Quite obviously the intermediary causes of creation are the conduits that bring the divine mercy, life, sustenance and other bounties to the creatures; and as such they are intercessors between the Creator and the created. :Some Qur'anic verses too are based on this very theme

whatever, is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can ;(intercede with Him but by His permission (۲:۲۵۵

Surely your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and He is firmly established on throne, regulating the affair; there is no intercessor except .(after His permission (۱۰:۳

Intercession in the sphere of creation is only the intermediation of causes between the Creator and the created thing and effect, in bringing it into being and regulating its .affairs

۲. Intercession in legislation: Intercession, as analysed earlier,

:is effective in this sphere too. It is in this context that Allah says

On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows ;(and whose word He is pleased with (۲۰: ۱۰۹

; (And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits (۳۴:۲۳

And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at ;(all except after Allah has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses(۵۳:۲۶

; (and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves . . . (۲۱:۲۸ . . .

And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he .(who bears witness of the truth and they know(him) (۴۳:۸۶

These verses clearly affirm intercessory role for various servants of Allah both men and angels - with divine permission and pleasure. It means that Allah has given them some power and authority in this matter, and to Him belongs all the kingdom and all .the affairs

Those intercessors may appeal to Allah's mercy, forgiveness and other relevant attributes to cover and protect a servant who otherwise would have deserved .punishment because of his sins and transgressions

That intercession would transfer his case from the general law of recompense to the special domain of grace and mercy. (It has already been explained that the effect of intercession is based on shifting a case from the former's to the latter's jurisdiction; it is not a confrontation between one law and the other.) Allah

:clearly says

.(so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones (۲۵:۷۰ . . .

Allah has the power to change one type of deed into other, in the same way as He :may render an act null and void. He says

And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them as ; (scattered floating dust (۲۵:۲۳

; (so He rendered their deeds null (۴۷:۹ . . .

If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your ;((small) sins (۴:۳۱

Surely Allah does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and . (forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases (۴:۴۸

The last quoted verse is certainly about the cases other than true belief and repentance, because with belief and repentance even polytheism is forgiven, like any :other sin. Also Allah may nurture a small deed to make it greater than the original

;(These shall be granted their reward twice (۲۸:۵۴

.(Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it (۶:۱۶۰

:Likewise, He may treat a nonexistent deed as existing

And (as for) those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring and We will not diminish to them aught of their work; every .(man is responsible for what he has done (۵۲:۲۱

To make a long story short, Allah does what He please, and decrees as He wills. Of ,course, He does so persuant to His servants' interest

and in accordance with an intermediary cause - and intercession of the intercessors (e.g., the prophets, the friends of Allah and those who are nearer to Him) is one of those causes, and certainly no rashness or injustice is entailed therein.

It should have been clear by now that intercession, in its true sense, belongs to Allah only; all His attributes are intermediaries between Him and His creatures and are the channels through which His grace, mercy and decrees pass to the creatures; He is the real and all-encompassing intercessor:

(Say: "Allah's is the intercession altogether" (۳۹:۴۴);

... you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessor (۳۲:۴);

... there is no guardian for them nor any intercessor besides Him (۶:۵۱).

The intercessors, other than Allah, get that right by His permission, by His authority.

In short, intercession with Him is a confirmed reality - in cases where it does not go against the divine glory and honour.

۲. The Objections Against Intercession

point

Intercession, as explained above, is a confirmed reality -not in every case but in approved ones. The Qur'an and the Tradition do not prove more than this. A little meditation on the meaning of intercession is enough to lead to this conclusion. Intercession is mediation in causality and effectiveness. Obviously causality cannot be limitless and unconditional.

No cause can be a cause of every effect, nor can an effect be governed by every cause - otherwise it would render the system of cause and effect null and void. Those who do not believe in intercession have

fallen in this very trap – they thought that we affirm the intercession in its totality without any condition or limit. All their objections emanates from this very :misunderstanding

First Objection

point

Allah has threatened to punish the wrongdoer; now supposedly He waives the punishment on the Day of Judgement. The question is whether this waiver is justice or injustice. If it is justice, then the original promise of punishment would be injustice, quite unworthy of divine majesty; and if it is injustice, then the intercession of the prophets, for example, would be a plea for injustice, and it is a folly that should not be .attributed to the prophets

Reply

First: What will they say about those orders that are given only to test the loyalty of a servant and are changed at the last moment, like the order to Ibrahīm to kill Isma'īl? Surely its waiver too like the original order was based on justice. Such orders are .given only to test the hidden quality of the servant concerned

Likewise, it may be said that salvation is written for all the believers. The laws of the shari `ah were ordained with punishments prescribed for transgressors – in order .that the disbelievers should perish because of their disbelief

As for the obedient believers their rank would be enhanced by their good deeds. And as for the disobedient believers, they would be rescued by intercession: that intercession might be effective either totally or partially; in later case, they would have to suffer some of the punishments in al-Barzakh

.or on the Day of Judgement itself and then they would get deliverance

Thus the original law with the prescribed punishment for the defaulters is nothing but .justice, and, the subsequent waiver of that punishment too is nothing but justice

Second: The waiver of the prescribed punishment as a result of intercession could be compared with the previous order - in being based on justice or injustice - only if that waiver were a contradiction of the previous order. But we have explained that it is not .so

Intercession is not a contradiction of, or confrontation between one cause (divine legislation) and the other (intercession); it is in fact shifting his case from one .(jurisdiction (reward and punishment) to the other (mercy and forgiveness

Second Objection

point

It is the established practice of Allah, that His actions are always safe from contradiction and conflict. Whatever He decrees and orders, without any exception, runs on an established pattern. And this is the foundation which the system of cause :and effect has been built upon. Allah says

This is a straight path with Me, Surely, as regards My servants, thou hast no authority over them except those who follow thee of the deviators. And surely Hell is the ;(promised place of them all (۱۵:۴۱-۴۳

And (know) that this is My path, the straight one, therefore, follow it, and follow not ;((other) ways, for they will scatter you away from His way (۶:۱۵۳

For you shall not find any alteration an the course of Allah; and you shall not find any change in

.(the course of Allah (۳۵:۴۳

And intercession, if effective, would certainly create conflict and contradiction in the actions of Allah: If intercession caused waiver of punishment from all the sinners, of all their sins, then it would defeat the very purpose of the sharī`ah and would turn the .whole system into a joke

And if only some of the sinners or only some of their sins were forgiven, then there would occur contradiction in divine actions and change and alteration in Allah's established course. Certainly, all the sinners are transgressors and every sin is disobedience of divine command. Therefore, forgiving only some of them or only .some of their sins, because of intercession, would be impossible

Intercession is used in this life of ours, where people are influenced by their desires or social connections. It cannot work in the affairs of the sharī`ah nor can it influence the .divine judgement in any way

Reply

No one doubts that the path of Allah is straight and His course without any change or conflict. But it should not be forgotten that this one and unchanged course is based on all His relevant attributes, not on only one or two of them. Allah is the One Who bestows on every creature diverse things like life, death, sustenance, bounty and so .on

These are the decrees that are contradictory or unrelated to each other; they do not have the same connection with the issuing authority i.e. God. Otherwise the .relationship of cause and effect would become null and void

For

example, Allah does not restore a sick man to health by virtue of His death-giving power; rather He does so because He is Merciful, Benevolent, Giver of health and Bestower of bounties. Likewise, He does not destroy an arrogant tyrant by His mercy and beneficence, but because He is the Avenger, the Omnipotent and the Subduer.

The Qur'an is the best witness of this fact: Whenever it ascribes an event or affair to Him, it invariably always mentions the appropriate attribute by which that affair or event was decreed and managed.

You may say that every affair and every thing is decreed by Allah because of its underlying benefit and good. And He does whatever He does by His all relevant attributes, and not by only one or some of them.

There is always action and reaction between benefits and good of various courses of a certain affair; and Allah issues His decree as a result of His knowledge that encompasses all those aspects; His vision is not limited to one or two sides only.

Had there been one fixed cause or attribute, there would have been no change or difference between a believer and a non-believer, between a pious person and a debauchee; but there are numerous causes and attributes, and their sum-total often has effects quite different from the effect of its individual parts.

Therefore, intercession, and the consequent waiver of punishment - based on sum-total of numerous causes like mercy, pardon, judgement, and giving everyone his due right - does not entail

.any change in the established course, nor any deviation from the right path

Third Objection

point

Intercession, according to common understanding, prevails upon the authority to do against his original will. In other words, the original will is abrogated and changed .because of the intercessor

A just judge would never accept an intercession unless his knowledge is changed, e.g., his original judgement was wrong, and then he was made to realize that justice .demanded a course opposite to his original plan

An unjust judge would accept intercession of his friends knowing fully well that the course suggested was wrong; but he values his personal relations more than the demands of justice and equity. Obviously, both these alternatives are impossible so far as Allah is concerned; His will is related to His knowledge, and His knowledge is .eternal and unchangeable

Reply

Intercession has nothing to do with change of will or knowledge. What actually changes is the thing willed about or known. Allah knows that a certain man will pass through various stages in his life; for a time his condition will be excellent - and Allah wills about him a certain will; and He knows that later his condition will change - and .(He wills about him another will; and every day He is in a (new) state (of glory

:And He has said

Allah effaces what He pleases and establishes (likewise), and with Him is the basis of ;(the Book (۱۳:۳۹

.(Nay, both His hands are spread out, He expends as He pleases (۶:۶۴

The same happens with our knowledge and

will. We know that soon night will come and we will not be able to see in darkness, but a few hours later the sun will rise dispelling the darkness. When night comes our will is directed to light a lamp, and later when the morning comes the will is directed to extinguish that lamp. In this case, there was no change at all in our knowledge and will; what changed was the objects of that knowledge and will.

And consequently they ceased to be governed by that knowledge and that will. After all, not every knowledge is related to every known object, nor every will is connected to every purpose.

What is impossible for Allah is disagreement of His knowledge with the thing known, or of His will with its object - while that thing or object remains unchanged. In other words, it is impossible for Him to be mistaken in His knowledge or for His will to be ineffective.

We see an apparition far away and take it to be a man; on coming nearer we find that it was a horse. In this case, our "knowledge" did not agree with its object; it was a mistake. Likewise, we intend to do a certain work, then we realize that it would be wrong to do so; here our "will" was cancelled and became ineffective.

But in these cases the objects of our knowledge and will had not changed. Such "disagreement" is certainly impossible for Allah. But as we have seen, intercession and

.the subsequent waiver of punishment does not come into this category

Fourth Objection

point

Had Allah promised intercession, or had His prophets brought this message to their nations, the people would have been emboldened to disobey the commandments of Allah, and to transgress the limits of the sharī`ah.

It would have defeated the whole purpose behind the institutions of prophethood and religion. If we are to avoid this inherent difficulty, we shall have to interpret the relevant Qur'anic verses and Tradition in a way that does not collide with this basic concept.

Reply

First: What will they say about the verses showing that Allah's mercy and forgiveness is all-encompassing? For example:

Surely Allah does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases (۴:۴۸).

This verse, as explained earlier, covers the cases other than repentance, as the exception of polytheism shows - because in cases of repentance even polytheism may be forgiven.

Second: The promise or message of intercession could incite people to disregard the rules of the sharī`ah, if it were accompanied by one of the following factors:

۱. If it had pin-pointed either the sinner - by name or description - who was to be forgiven through intercession; or the particular sin that was to be wiped off - unconditionally, definitely and without any ambiguity.

۲. Or, if intercession were effective against all types of punishment and at all times.

Read the following sentences to understand what the above conditions mean: "All men, or a named group of men, will

never be held responsible for any sins they commit; nor will they ever be punished for ".their transgressions." "A particularly named sin will never be punished for

Obviously, such declarations would defeat the basic purpose of the sharī`ah. But Allah has kept both things vague. He has never said what sins or which sinners might benefit from intercession, nor has He said whether all or only some of the punishment would be waived; nor has He made it clear whether or not the intercession would be .effective in every condition and at all times

As all these things have been kept vague, no one could be sure of getting the benefit of intercession. In view of this uncertainty, he cannot feel bold to trespass the limits of Allah. On the other hand the possibility of intercession would save him from losing the hope of divine mercy, will keep him away from despair and despondency, from pessi… .mism and hopelessness

:Then there is the verse

If you avoid great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your (small) .(sins . . . (۴:۳۱

It clearly says that Allah will forgive small sins and waive the punishment, provided the servant shuns great sins. If Allah can say, "If you avoid great-sins, I shall forgive the small ones", He can as easily say, "If you keep your belief pure until you come to Me with unpolluted faith, I shall accept the intercession of intercessors on your ".behalf

;The important thing is to keep the faith strong

the sins weaken the faith, harden the heart and lead to polytheism. Allah has said: But ;(none feels secure from Allah's plan except the people who shall perish (۷:۹۹

;(Nay! rather what they used to do has become like rust upon their hearts (۸۳:۱۴

Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the signs of Allah . . .(. (۳۰ :۱۰

The hope of divine mercy (generated by the belief of intercession), in many cases, leads to repentance, piety and good deeds - and often the servant reaches a stage where intercession is not needed after all. It is in fact the most important benefit of .this belief

Likewise, if it were mentioned who would benefit from intercession or which sins were likely to be interceded about, but it was declared that it would nevertheless entail some types of punishment upto a certain period, the man could not feel bold to .commit sins

And the fact is that the Qur'an has nowhere pin-pointed the sin or the sinner likely to benefit from intercession. On the contrary, it speaks only of averting the punishment .from some people. And no objection can be levelled against such a vague expression

Fifth Objection

point

Utmost that reason may prove is the possibility, and not the actuality, of intercession - in fact, it does not prove even that much. So far as the Qur'an is concerned, it does not .show that intercession will actually take place

.Some verses refute the idea of intercession altogether, e.g

the day comes . . .

.(in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession (۲:۲۵۴

,.Other verses say that intercession shall be of no avail, e.g

.(So the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them (۷۴:۴۸

,Still others, after refuting the actuality of intercession, add the proviso like

,(but by His permission (۲:۲۵۵

,(except after His permission(۱۰:۳

. (except for him whom He approves (۲۱:۲۸

This style (a negative followed by exception of divine permission or approval) is used in the Qur'an invariably always to emphasize the negative statement; for example, it :says

;(We will make you recite so you shall not forget, except what Allah pleases (۸۷:۶-۷

Abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord . (pleases (۱۱:۱۰۷

Obviously, there is no definite declaration in the Qur'an proving the actuality of intercession. As for the Tradition, those giving its details are not reliable; and the .reliable ones do not say more than the Qur'an does

Reply

As for the verses refuting the intercession we have already explained that what they reject is the intercession without the permission of Allah. The verse ۷۴:۴۸, which says that "the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them", is not a proof against .intercession; on the contrary it proves its actuality

The verse is in the Chapter, "The Clothed One" and speaks about "them", i.e., a particular group of wrong-doers mentioned in verses ۴۱ to ۴۷; it is they who shall not benefit from the intercession of intercessors; it does not speak about all the sinners.

Moreover, it uses the phrase, “the intercession

p: ۳۳۰

."of intercessors

There is a difference between saying, "Intercession shall not avail them", and saying, "Intercession of intercessors shall not avail them". When an infinitive verb or verbal noun is used in genitive or possessive case, it proves its actual existence, as ash-Shaykh `Abdu '۱-Qahir has clearly written in Dala'ilu 'l-ī` jaz.

Therefore, the expression, "intercession of intercessors" proves that some intercession shall definitely take place on that day, although that particular group shall not be able to benefit from it. Also, the plural, "intercessors" points to the presence of a group of intercessors.

Look for example at the phrases:

(she was of those who remained behind (۷:۸۳);

(and he was one of the unbelievers (۲:۳۴);

(so he is of those who go astray (۷:۱۷۵);

(My covenant does not include the unjust ones (۲:۱۲۴).

The plurals in all these phrases would have been irrelevant if they did not mean existence of more than two persons having the attributes mentioned. Likewise, the verse: So the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them, instead of refuting the intercession, clearly proves the existence of intercessors and, therefore, intercession.

As for the verses that contain the exceptions, "but by His permission", "except after His permission", they clearly prove the actuality of intercession, especially as the infinitive verb "permission" is used in genitive case (His permission). No one having a taste of Arabic literature can entertain any doubt about it.

It is childish to say that the two phrases, "but by His permission" and "except for him whom He approves" mean the same thing, i.e., the

divine will. Moreover, the Qur'an has used various phrases of exception in various places, e.g., “but by His permission”, “except after His permission”, “except for him whom He approves” and “but he who bears witness of the truth and they know (him).”

Even if we accept that the divine permission and divine approval mean the same thing, i.e., divine will, can it be said that the last-mentioned phrase (but he who bears witness of the truth . . .) too implies the same? Such interpretation implies such inexactness and laxity in talk as even an ordinary Arab would not like attributed to him, let alone an eloquent one.

Can we accuse the most eloquent divine speech, i.e., the Qur'an, of such inarticulateness? As for the Tradition, we shall show later that they too follow the line adopted by the Qur'an.

Sixth Objection

point

The verses do not say clearly that on the Day of Judgement, the punishment would be averted from the wrong-doers, after the sin has been proved and the sentence pro... nounced. The intercession attributed to the prophets means that they were the intermediaries between the Lord and His servant, they received revelation from their Lord and conveyed it to the people and guided them to the right path, leading them to spiritual and ethical perfection. In this sense, they are the intercessors for the believers in this world as well as in the hereafter.

Reply

No doubt, it is one of the aspects of intercession; but intercession is not limited to this much. The prophets called

their people to the true faith and repentance, and this is the intercession mentioned :by the objector. Now let us look again at the verse

Surely Allah does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and .(forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases (۴:۴۸

As described earlier, this verse covers the cases other than the true faith and repentance. (True faith and repentance would wipe out the polytheism too.) The exception of polytheism shows that here the talk is about other things - and .intercession, in the meaning explained by us, is one of those cases

Seventh Objection: Reason does not prove that intercession really exists; and the Qur'anic verses on this subject are ambiguous - in one place they prove it, at others refute it; sometimes they add some proviso, at the other they speak unconditionally. Therefore, the ethics of religion demands that we should believe in all of them and .leave their meaning to Allah

Reply: The ambiguous verses, when referred to the decisive ones, become decisive themselves. It is an easy process which is not beyond our ability and power. We shall :explain this subject when writing about the verse

of it there are some verses decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are .(ambiguous . . . (۳:۷

?Who will benefit from intercession .۳

As explained earlier, it was not in the best interest of religious guidance to pin-point who should benefit from intercession on the Day of Judgement. But vague hints and ambiguous statements can do no harm, and

.the Qur'an has used them to give us a general idea

:Allah says

Every soul is held in pledge for what it has earned, except the people of the right hand, in gardens; they shall ask each other about the guilty: "What has brought you :into hell?" They shall say

We were not of those who prayed; and we used not to feed the poor; and we used to" enter (into vain discourse) with those who entered (into vain discourse); and we used to call the Day of Judgement a lie, till death overtook us." So the intercession of .(intercessors shall not avail them (۷۴:۳۸-۴۸

The verses declare that every soul shall remain mortgaged on the Day of Judgement for the sins it has earned, held responsible for the wrongs done in this life. The only exception is of the people of the right hand - they shall be released from that pledge, .and shall settle in the gardens

They shall see the wrong-doers who shall be held captive of their sins, and herded into hell; they shall ask them for the reason of their entering into hell, and the guilty shall reply by enumerating four sins as the cause of their disgrace and punishment. And because of those sins, they shall lose the benefit of the intercession of .intercessors

It implies that the people of the right hand would be free from those sins which deprive a man of the benefit of intercession. Allah shall release them from the fetters ;of sins and wrongs

.and this release shall be as a result of the intercession of intercessors

The verses are a part of the Chapter ۷۴, (The Clothed One); it was revealed at Mecca at the beginning of the Call, as its contents amply prove. At that time the prayer and .zakat as known to us were not promulgated

In this context the prayer, mentioned in the verse, “We were not of those who prayed”, could only mean turning one's face towards Allah with humility and sub… mission; likewise, the verse, “and we used not to feed the poor”, could only refer to translated here as = الخوض) general spending on the poor in the way of Allah. al-Khawd entering into vain discourse) literally means to wade into water, to plunge or rush into .something

The verse, “we used to enter (into vain discourse). . .”, implies entanglement in the vain things of this life, which distract a man from remembrance of the hereafter; it .may also mean vilification of the verses which remind one of the Day of Reckoning

:Those wrong-doers, therefore, shall be guilty of four sins

Not turning their faces towards Allah with humility and submission; (۲) not spending (۱) in the way of Allah; (۳) vilification of divine revelations; and (۴) calling the Day of .Judgement a lie

These four evils destroy the foundation of religion. Religion demands following the purified guides, setting one's face towards Allah, turning away from the worldly .distractions, setting one's eyes on the Day of Judgement

If a man succeeds in it, he

will be free from the third and the fourth sins, i.e., vilification of divine revelation and calling the Day of Judgement a lie. When, in this way, his fundamental belief is .secured, he shall feel the urge to turn towards Allah and to help fellow human beings

These two factors are represented in these verses by prayer and spending in the way of Allah. Faith and deed all would thus combine to build the structure of religion. Other .elements, like belief in Oneness of God and the prophethood, would naturally follow

The people of the right hand are the ones who shall benefit from the intercession; and they are the ones whose religion and faith Allah is pleased with. They may come on the Day of Judgement with perfect deeds - and in that case there will be no need for any intercession; or they may come burdened with some sins - and it is they who shall benefit from the intercession. Therefore, the intercession shall be for those people of .the right hand who may have committed some sins

:Allah says

If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your .((small) sins (۴:۳۱

Therefore, anybody coming on the Day of Judgement with an unexpiated sin shall certainly be guilty of a great sin - had it been a small one it would have been expiated long ago. We have to conclude from this verse that the intercession shall be for those people of the right hand who

shall be guilty of great sins. The Prophet has said: "Verily my intercession is for those of my ummah who shall have committed great sins; as for the good-doers, there shall ". . . be no difficulty for them

The designation, "the people of the right hand", is the opposite of "the people of the left hand". These Qur'anic terms are based on the fact that man, on the Day of .Judgement, shall be given his book of deeds either in his right hand or in the left

:Allah says

Remember) the day when We will call every people with their Imam; then whoever is) given his book in his right hand, these shall read their book; and they shall not be dealt with a whit unjustly. And whoever is blind in this, he shall (also) be blind in the .(hereafter; and more erring from the way (۱۷:۷۱-۷۲

We shall describe, when writing about this verse, that getting the book in the right hand is synonymous with following the rightful Imam; likewise getting the book in the :left hand means following a misguiding leader or Imam. Allah says about Pharaoh

He shall lead his people on the resurrection day, and bring them down to the fire .((۱۱:۹۸)

It means that not only the required four qualities but even the nomenclature, "the people of the right hand", is based on the fact that they followed an approved religion, .that Allah was pleased with them

:Allah says in another place

and they do not intercede except for him whom He

.(approves (۲۱:۲۸

This approval is general and without any condition or qualification. It is not like the one :mentioned in verse

except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with . . . ,((۲۰:۱۰۹

where approval or pleasure is related to a servant's word. In the verse under discussion the pleasure or approval is related to them, not to their deed; in other words, "whom He approves" means `whose religion he approves'. Accordingly this .verse too has the same import as the previous ones

:Again Allah says

The day on which We will gather the pious ones to the Beneficent God as the guests of honour, and We will drive the guilty to hell like (thirsty) herd (to the watering place). They shall own not any intercession, save he who has made a covenant with the .(Beneficent God (۱۹:۸۵-۸۷

The one who has made a covenant with Allah shall be given possession of intercession. It should not be forgotten that not every guilty servant is an unbeliever. :Allah says

Whoever comes to his Lord (being) guilty, for him is surely hell; he shall not die therein nor shall he live; and whoever comes to Him a believer (and) he has done good deeds .(indeed, these it is who shall have the high ranks (۲۰:۷۴-۷۵

According to these verses, anyone who is not a good-doing believer is guilty, no matter whether he is an unbeliever or a wrong-doing believer. The latter group, i.e., ,those who have true belief but have also committed sins

is the one that has made a covenant with God. Allah says: Did I not enjoin you (make a covenant with you),

O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy, and that you should worship Me; this is the straight path (۳۶:۶۰-۶۱).

The phrase, "and that you should worship Me", is a covenant in the meaning of order, enjoinment; and the sentence, "this is the straight path", is also a covenant by implication because the straight path leads to felicity and safety. However, such believers shall enter the hell because of sins they had committed, then they shall be rescued by intercession.

It is to this covenant that the verse ۲:۸۰ alludes:

(The Jews) say: "Fire shall not touch us but for a few days." Say: "Have you received a promise (covenant) from Allah?"

These verses too, therefore, lead us to the same conclusion, namely, the group that shall benefit from intercession on the Day of Judgement is that of the believers who would have committed great sins; it is they whose religion and belief Allah is pleased with and has approved.

۴. Who are the intercessors?

point

It has been described that intercession takes place in two spheres: in creation and in legislation. So far as the intercession in creation is concerned, all intermediary causes are intercessors because they are placed between the Creator and the created.

As for the intercessors in the sphere of legislation and judgement, they may be divided into two categories: (۱) intercessors in this life, and (۲) those

.in the hereafter

Intercessors in This Life

All the things that bring a man nearer to Allah and make him eligible for divine :forgiveness. The following come into this category

:a. Repentance: Allah says

Say: "O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; surely He is .(the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord. . . " (۳۹:۵۳ - ۵۴

It covers all the sins, even polytheism; if one repents from it and believes in One God, .one's previous polytheism is wiped out and forgiven

:b. True faith: Allah says

O you who believe! fear Allah and believe in His Apostle: He will give you two portions of His mercy, and make for you a light with which you will walk, and forgive you . . . .((۵۷:۲۸

:c. Good deed

Allah has promised those who believe and do good deeds (that there is) for them ; (pardon and great recompense (۵:۹

.(O you who believe! fear Allah and seek an approach (medium) to Him . . . (۵:۳۵

.There are many verses of this theme

:d. The Qur'an

Indeed has come to you from Allah a light and a manifest Book whereby Allah guides him who follows His pleasure, into the ways of peace, and takes them out from . (darkness towards the light by His will and guides them to the straight path (۵:۱۶

e. Any thing related to a good deed, like the mosques, holy places and auspicious .days

f. The prophets and the apostles, as they

p: ۳۴۰

:seek forgiveness for their people. Allah says

and had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Apostle had (also) asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful (۴:۶۴).

:g. The angels, as they too ask forgiveness for the believers. Allah says

Those who bear the throne and those around it celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who believe (۴۰:۷);

and the angels celebrate the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on . . . earth . . . (۴۲:۵).

h. The believers themselves, as they seek pardon for their believer brothers and for :themselves. Allah quotes them as saying

and pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy on us, Thou art our Guardian . . . (۲:۲۸۶).

Intercessors in the Hereafter

We use the term, intercessor, in the meaning explained in the beginning. The :following come into this category

:a. The prophets and the apostles: Allah says

And they say: "The Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son." Glory be to Him. Nay! they are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves. (۲۱:۲۶-۲۸).

Those who were called 'son' of God, are in fact His honoured servants and they do intercede for him whom He approves. Among them is `Isa, son of

Maryam, and he was a prophet. It means that the prophets do intercede for approved .persons

:Again Allah says

And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for (or, do not own) .(intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know (him) (۴۳:۸۶

b. The angels: The preceding two verses prove that the angels too may intercede, :because they too were called daughters of Allah. Moreover, Allah says

And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at ;(all except after Allah has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses (۵۳:۲۶

On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with. He knows what is before them and what is behind .(them . . . (۲۰:۱۰۹-۱۱۰

:c. The witnesses: Allah says

And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for (or, do not own) .(intercession, but he who bears witness of truth and they know (him) (۴۳:۸۶

This verse shows that those who bear witness of the truth do own (or, have authority .for) intercession

The witness mentioned here does not mean the one killed in the battlefield. It refers to the witness for the deeds, as was described in the Chapter of the Opening, and will :be further explained under the verse

And thus we have made you a medium (i.e. just) nation that you may be witnesses over the people and (that) the Apostle may be a witness over you

.(۲:۱۴۳) . . .

d. The believers: They shall be joined to the witnesses on the Day of Judgement; it :follows that they too may intercede like the witnesses. Allah says

And (as for) those who believe in Allah and His apostles, these it is that are the truthful .(and the witnesses with their Lord . . . (۵۷:۱۹

?Intercession: about what .۵

The intercession in creation is related to every cause in this world of the cause and .effect

As for the intercession in matters of legislation and judgement, some of them wipe out every sin and its punishment, right from polytheism to the smallest one. For .example, repentance done, and true faith acquired, before the Day of Resurrection

Some wipe out effects of some particular sins, like some specified good deeds. As for the issue under discussion, i.e., the intercession of the prophets and other believers on the Day of Judgement, we have already explained that it shall avail those believers .who might have committed big sins, but whose faith Allah is pleased with

?When will intercession be effected .۶

We are talking here too about the intercession on the Day of Judgement to waive off the punishment of sins. We have earlier quoted the verses of the Chapter ۴۲ (The :(Clothed One

Every soul is held in pledge for what it has earned, except the people of the right . (hand, in gardens they shall ask each other about the guilty (۷۴:۳۸-۴۱

As explained earlier, the verses clearly say who would benefit from the intercession, and who wont. They also imply that the intercession will

get the wrong-doing believers released from fetters of their sins, and protect them .from abiding for ever in the hell

But there is nothing to show that intercession might avail against the turmoils of the Day of Resurrection. Rather, the verse proves that it will be effective only for rescuing .the guilty believers from the hell, or preventing them from entering into it

It may be inferred from the verses that this talk will take place after the people of the garden have settled in the gardens, and the people of the hell in the hell; and that the intercessors shall then intercede for a group of the guilty ones and rescue them from .the hell

The phrase, "in gardens", implies it, as does the question, "What has brought you into hell?" Both phrases imply a more or less permanent abode. Likewise, the comment, "so the intercession . . . avails them not", denotes something occurring in present time .i.e. after both groups have settled in their abodes

the period between death and the Day of Resurrection) and = البرزخ) As for al-Barzakh presence of the Prophet and the Imams of the Ahlu '۱-bayt (a.s.) at the time of death and at the questioning in the grave and the help given by them to the believer to :overcome those difficulties (as will be described under the verse

And there shall not be any one of the people of the book but he must certainly believe ,(in him before his death (۴:۱۵۹

these things have nothing to

do with intercession. It is rather exercising the authority given to them by Allah over the creation.

Allah says:

. . . and on the most elevated places there shall be men who know all by their marks, and they shall call out to the dwellers of the garden: "Peace be on you; they shall not have yet entered it, though they hope.". .

And the dwellers of the most elevated places shall call out to men whom they will recognize by their marks, saying: "Of no avail were to you your amassings and your behaving haughtily. Are these they about whom you swore that Allah will not bestow mercy on them?" "Enter the garden; you shall have no fear nor shall you grieve" (۷:۴۶-۴۹).

It gives a glimpse of the authority or rule vested in them by the permission of Allah. If we look at the verse ۱۷:۷۱ from this angle, it too throws light on this aspect:

(Remember) the day when We will call every people with their Imam; then whoever is given his book in his right hand . . .

The intermediary position of the Imam in calling every people and giving them their books is a sort of authority and rule vested in him by Allah.

To make a long story short, intercession shall happen at the very last stage on the Day of Judgement; it shall bring the divine forgiveness to the guilty believers, prevent them from entering into hell and take those out who would have entered into it; it

shall be by extension of mercy and/or manifestation of benevolence and .magnanimity

Tradition

Al-Husayn ibn Khalid narrates from ar-Rida (a.s.), who narrated through his forefathers from the Leader of the faithful (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allah :(s.a.w.a.) said

Whoever does not believe in my reservoir, may Allah not bring him to my reservoir,` and whoever does not believe in my intercession, may Allah not extend to him my intercession.' Then he (s.a.w.a.) said: `Verily, my intercession is for those of my ummah who shall have committed great sins; as for the good-doers, there shall be no "'.difficulty for them

al-Husayn ibn Khalid said: "I asked ar-Rida (a.s.): `O son of the Messenger of Allah! What is then the meaning of the words of Allah, Mighty and Great is He: and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves?' He (a.s.) said: `They do not (intercede except for him whose religion Allah is pleased with.' "(١

The author says: The tradition of the Prophet, "Verily my intercession is . . .", has been narrated by both sects with numerous chains; and we have shown earlier that it is .based on the theme of Qur'anic verses

Suma`ah ibn Mihran narrates from Abū Ibrahīm (a.s.) that he said about the words of Allah: may be your Lord will raise you to a praised position: "The people, on the Day of Resurrection, will remain standing for forty years; and the sun will be ordered so that it will ride over their heads and they

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١- al-Amali, as-Sadūq

.will be bridled by sweat - and the earth will be told not to accept any of their sweat

So, they shall approach Adam to intercede for them, and he will direct them to Nūh, and Nūh will direct them to Ibrahīm, and Ibrahīm will direct them to Mūsa, and Mūsa :will direct them to `Isa, and `Isa will direct them saying

You should seek help of Muhammad, the last prophet.' Thereupon, Muhammad` (s.a.w.a.) will say: `I'll do it;' and will proceed until, arriving at the door of the garden, he will knock at it. It will be asked, 'Who is it?' (while Allah knows better!), and he will '.say: 'Muhammad

Then it will be said: 'Open for him.' When the door will be opened he will turn to his Lord, falling in sajdah. He will not raise his head until he is told: 'Speak up and ask, you '.shall be given; and intercede, your intercession shall be granted

He will raise his head and turning to his Lord will fall (again) insajdah. Then he will be promised as before; then he will raise his head. (Thereupon, he shall intercede) until .he will intercede even for him who would have been burnt in the fire

Therefore, on the Day of Resurrection, no one among all the nations will be more eminent than Muhammad (s.a.w.a.); and it is (the meaning of) the words of Allah: May (be your Lord will raise you to a praised position. "(١

The author says: This meaning is narrated by both sects

p: ٣۴٧

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al-`Ayyashi -١

in great number, in detail as well as in short, with numerous chains; and it proves that the "praised position" means the position of intercession. This tradition is not in conflict with intercession of other prophets, because probably their intercession will .be an offshoot of our Prophet's, and it will begin on his hand

Ubayd ibn Zurarah said: "Abu `Abdillah (a.s.) was asked whether a believer would` have the right of intercession. He said: `Yes.' Then someone said: `Will even a :believer need the intercession of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) on that day?' He said

Yes. The believers too will come with wrongs and sins; and there will be none but he` shall need the intercession of Muhammad on that day.' " (`Ubayd) said: "And someone :asked him about the words of the Messenger of Allah

I am the Chief of the children of Adam, and I say this without boasting.' He said: `Yes.'' (Then) he said: `He will hold the chain-link of the door of the garden and open it; then he will fall in sajdah, and Allah will tell him: `Raise your head, do intercede, your '.intercession shall be granted; ask, you shall be given

So he will raise his head and again will fall in sajdah; then Allah will (again) say to him: `Raise your head, do intercede, your intercession shall be granted, and ask, you shall be given.' Thereupon he will raise his head and intercede - and his intercession will be (accepted; and he will ask and be given."(١

Muhammad ibn

١- al-`Ayyashi

al-Qasim narrates through his chains from Bishr ibn Shurayh al-Basrī that he said: "I said to Muhammad ibn 'Alf (a.s.): `Which verse in the Book of Allah is the most hope-inspiring?' He said: `And what do your people say (about it)?' I said:

They say, (it is the verse,) Say: "O my servants! who have acted extravagantly` against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah." '

He said: `But we, the people of the house, do not say so.' I said: `Then what do you say about it?' He said: `We say (it is the verse,) And soon will your Lord give you so that you shall be well pleased. (It means) the intercession, by Allah the intercession, by Allah the intercession.' "(١)

The author says: The words of Allah, may be your Lord will. raise you to a praised position, refers to the Prophet's glorious position of intercession, as the numerous Tradition of the Prophet himself prove.

Moreover, the wording of the verse too supports it: "will raise you" shows that it is a position which he will attain in future, i.e. on the Day of Judgement; "praised" is general and unconditional, and implies that he shall be praised by all men, past and present.

Al-Hamd (الحمد) means to praise someone for a good done to you intentionally. This definition shows that the Prophet will do something by his own will and power which will benefit all of them and in return everyone will praise him. That is why

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١- at-Tafsīr, Furat ibn Ibrahīm

the Imam said in the tradition of `Ubayd ibn Zurarah, "and there will be no one but he shall need the intercession of Muhammad on that day."

We shall later explain it further.

Now about the declaration that the verse, "and soon will your Lord give you so that you shall be well pleased," is the most hope-inspiring one in the Qur'an - especially when compared to the verse,

Say: "O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord and submit to Him before there comes to you the punishment. . . and follow the best that has been revealed to you. . ." ((۳۹:۵۳-۵۵)).

Al-Qunut (القنوط = to lose hope, to despair) has been mentioned several times in the Qur'an. Allah quotes Ibrahīm (a.s.) as saying:

And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord but the erring ones (۱۵:۵۶).

Also He quotes Ya'qūb (a.s.):

surely none despairs of Allah's mercy except the unbelieving ones (۱۲:۸۷).

But the context in both places shows it as referring to losing hope of divine mercy in matters of creation. As for the verse under discussion the context slows that it admonishes against losing hope of divine mercy in matters of legislation and judgement; look for instance at the words, who have acted extravagantly against their own souls.

They clearly say that one who has committed sins should not despair of the mercy of

Allah. Also Allah has promised forgiveness for the faults altogether without any exception. But this promise is followed by admonition to repent (turn to your Lord) and .submit to Allah and follow the divine commandments

The text on the whole demonstrates that a man who might have committed sins need not despair of the mercy of Allah as long as he is in a position to turn to Allah, to submit .to Him, and to follow His commandments

In short, this mercy is conditional. And there is a vast difference between this conditional mercy and the all-encompassing, unconditional mercy and unrestricted granting and pleasing which Allah has promised His Apostle, who himself was a mercy .for all the mankind

It is that promise which will make the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.a.) well pleased: and soon .will your Lord give you, so that you shall be well pleased

This last-mentioned verse occurs in a context where Allah mentions His grace and bounties to the Prophet; it is a unique promise never made to anyone else. The phrase, "will give you," is unconditional and unrestricted. A promise, somewhat similar, :has been made to a group of the people of the garden

;(they shall have what they please with their Lord (۴۲:۲۲

.(They have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet (۵۰:۳۵

These verses show that those people shall be given more than they wish for -and man by nature desires all that he can think of happiness, good and felicity. It means that they shall be

:given more than they can think of, as Allah says

.(So no soul knows what is hidden for them of the joy of the eyes (۳۲:۱۷

Now this is what Allah has promised those who believe and do good; and even this is beyond human imagination. Surely, what He shall give to His Prophet as His special .grace, must be far greater than this

This much about the grace of Allah. Now let us reflect upon "you shall be well pleased". Obviously this pleasure has no relation whatsoever to the pleasure a man should have for whatever Allah gives Him and decrees for him. Allah is the Master and the .servant has nothing of his own except the inherent need and poverty

He must always be happy and grateful for whatever his Master gives him, no matter whether it is more or less, big or small; he must always be pleased with whatever .Allah decrees for him, whether it looks comforting or distressing

This is what is expected of every good believer; surely the Prophet knows this ideal better, and acts upon it more perfectly, than anyone else; in short, he likes for himself .only that which Allah wills for him

Therefore, it would have been superfluous and irrelevant to say that he would be pleased after he was given something. It follows that this promised pleasure refers to something else. It refers to that happiness or satisfaction which a needy person .experiences when his need is fully met

A similar promise was given to some of

:His virtuous servants

As for) those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men. Their reward) with their Lord is gardens of perpetuity beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein for ever; Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him; that is for .(him who fears his Lord (۹۸:۷-۸

Its context shows that this too is to show some special divine favour for them, and hence it must be a very exclusive and comprehensive pleasure. At this juncture, it :should be mentioned that Allah has praised His Apostle in these words

.(to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful (۹:۱۲۸

:Keeping all these things in view, ponder on this question

Can the Prophet be pleased to enjoy the bounties of the garden, or can he be happy with the pleasures of the paradise, when some believers are imprisoned inside the ?hell

Remember that they are the people who believed in Allah as the One God, in the Prophet as the true prophet, and in what he brought with him as the true revelation; but they were overcome by their indiscretion and Satan twisted them between his fingers as a toy, and so they committed errors and sins - without any thought of .revolting against God, of any arrogance before Him

Even we, when we remember what mistakes we committed in past, what chances of spiritual perfection we missed before, we start blaming ourselves for all the shortcomings; then if we see some inexperienced youth indulging in youthful frolics, we are

.reluctant to condemn them; we feel compassion for them

But this mercy of ours is a manifestation of the imperfect compassion put in our nature by the Creator. How can we understand the mercy of the Lord of the worlds, in a place where the magnanimity of the compassionate, merciful Prophet and the mercy of the Most Merciful of all have to decide about the indiscretions of a powerless human being? Especially so when he had undergone all the torments of al-barzakh in ?proportion to his misdeeds

:al-Qummī narrates a tradition in his at-Tafsīr, under the verse

,(And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits (۳۴:۲۳

that Abu '۱-`Abbas al-Mukabbar said: "A servant of a wife of `Alī ibn al-Husayn (a.s.), :named Abū Ayman, came (to the fifth Imam - a.s.) and said

O Abū Ja'far! You mislead the people, saying, intercession of Muhammad, in...` tercession of Muhammad.' (Hearing this) Abu Ja'far became so angry that his face :took a glowering expression; then he said

Woe unto you! O Abū Ayman! Are you deluded by chastity of your stomach and` genitals? Why, when you will see the terrors of the resurrection, you shall certainly be !in need of intercession of Muhammad. Fie on you

Would he intercede except for him who would have been sentenced to the fire?' (Then) he said: 'There is no one from the early people to the later ones but he will '.need the intercession of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) on the Day of Resurrection

Then again Abū Ja'far said: 'Certainly

the Messenger of Allah has (authority of) intercession for his ummah, and we have (authority of) intercession for our Shī'ahs, and our Shī'ahs have (authority of) intercession for their families.'

Then he said: 'And surely a believer shall intercede for (very large number of) people like the (tribes of) Rabī'ah and Mudar. And surely a believer shall intercede for his servant, saying: "O my Lord! I owe this to him, he was protecting me from heat and cold." ' "

The author says: This tradition refers to a general intercession ("There is no one from the early people to the later ones but he will need the intercession of Muhammad . . .") and a particular one ("Fie on you! Would he intercede except for him who would have been sentenced to the fire?").

We find similar idea in al-`Ayyashī's tradition from `Ubayd ibn Zurarah mentioned earlier. There are other Tradition of the same theme narrated by both sects. It is supported also by the verse:

And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know (him) (۴۳:۸۶).

This verse shows that the prerequisite of intercession is the witnessing of the truth. The witnesses are the intercessors, the owners of the intercession. And we shall describe under verse ۲:۱۴۳

(And thus We have made you a medium [just] nation that you may be witnesses over the people and [that] the Apostle may be a witness over you),

that the prophets are the witnesses

and that Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is the witness over them; so he (s.a.w.a.) is the witness over the witnesses, and thus he is the intercessor for the intercessors; and without the testimony of the witnesses the foundation of the Day of Judgement would .crumble

The (fifth) Imam said about the verse, And intercession will not avail aught with Him :save him whom He permits

No prophet or apostle may intercede until Allah permits him, except the Apostle of" Allah, because Allah has already given him permission before the Day of Resurrection; and intercession is (allowed) to him and to the Imams from his progeny, (and after that to the prophets." (at-Tafsir, al-Qummi

Alī (a. s.) said: "The Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: `Three (groups) shall intercede` with Allah and their intercession will be accepted: The prophets, then the (religious) (scholars, then the martyrs.' "(١)

in the Qur'anic terminology means witnesses (الشهَداء) 'The author says: ash-Shuhada of the deeds; but in the Tradition of the Imams it is generally used for the martyrs who are killed in the way of Allah. And apparently it is in this meaning that the word .has been used in this tradition

The Imam said: "We have the (authority of) intercession; and the people who love us (have the (authority of) intercession."(٢)

The author says: Numerous Tradition prove that the Lady of paradise, Fatimah (a.s.) has the power and authority of intercession, as do his descendants other than the Imams. Likewise, a lot of Tradition bestow similar authority on the believers - even

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al-Khisal -١

al-Khisal -٢

.to their miscarried foetus

There is a well-known tradition that the Prophet said: “Marry (and) procreate; for I shall boast of you (i.e. your number) against other nations on the Day of Resurrection - even of miscarried foetus; he shall stand at the door of the garden in a restive ” '. . . mood; he shall be told to enter, but he will say: 'No, until my parents enter it

Abū `Abdillah narrates, through his father and grandfather, from 'Ali (a.s.) that he said: “The garden has eight gates: one for the entry of prophets and the truthful ones, the other for the martyrs and the good ones; and five gates are for the entry of our the path; the bridge = الصراط) Shī'ahs and lovers - I shall be standing on theas-Sirat :over the hell) praying and saying

My Lord! Save my Shī`ahs and my lovers and my helpers and those who followed me` in the (life of the) world.' Then all of a sudden there will come a voice from inside the :throne: `Your prayer is granted and your intercession for your Shī`ahs accepted

And every Shī`ah of mine and everyone who loves me, helps me and fights my' enemies by (his) deed or word, shall intercede for seventy thousand of his neighbours and relatives - and (there is) a gate from which shall enter all the Muslims who witness that there is no god except Allah and in whose heart there is not an iota of enmity towards us, the

(people of the house."(١)

Hafs al-Mu'adhdhin narrates that Abū `Abdillah (a.s.) wrote, inter alia, in a letter to his companions: "And know that none of the creatures of Allah shall avail you against Him, neither an angel who is near to Him, nor an apostle prophet nor any one below them. Whoever likes intercession of intercessors to avail him, should ask Allah to be pleased (with him."(٢)

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Jabir told Abū Ja'far (a.s.): 'May I be your ransom, O son of the Apostle of Allah! Narrate to me a tradition about your grandmother, Fatimah.' (Then the tradition continues, mentioning the intercession of Fatimah on the Day of :Resurrection, until it says:) Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said

Then, by God, no one among the people will remain (unsaved) except a doubting one' or an unbeliever or a hypocrite. When they shall be (put) into (various) ranks of the :hell, they shall cry out - as Allah has said

So we have no intercessors, nor a true friend: But if we could but once return, we '. (would be of the believers (٢٦:١٠٠-١٠٢

Then Abu Ja'far (a.s.) said: `But oh! how preposterous! They shall be denied what they ;asked for

and if they were ,sent back they would certainly return to what they were forbidden, (and most certainly they are liars (٦:٢٨) .' "(٣)

The author says: The Imam has proved by the sentence, "So we have no intercessors", that intercession will take place on the Day of Judgement. In this light, it is amusing to

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١- al-Khisal

٢- al-Kafi

٣- at-Tafsīr, Furat ibn Ibrahīm

see our adversaries trying to use it as an argument against intercession! Just as we :said about the verse

,(So the intercession of intercessors avails them not (۷۴:۴۸

.this verse too shows that intercession will surely take place on that day

If the Qur'an wanted to negate the intercession altogether, it would have used the singular form (. . . no intercessor nor a true friend). But it has used the plural, “So we have no intercessors”; and it proves that there shall be a group interceding on behalf .of some people, but it will not be of any avail to those particular speakers

Moreover, the following sentence, “But if we could but once return, we would be of the believers,” shows a desire within the frame of grief. Obviously such a desire is .related to that thing loss of which has caused the grief

Therefore, what this sentence implies is this: Would that we could return to the previous life; then we would be of the believers, so that the intercession of intercessors would avail us too, as it has benefited the believers. The verse, .therefore, is a good proof for intercession

Al-Kazim (a.s.) narrated from his father, through his forefathers, from the Prophet that he said: “My intercession is for those of my ummah who would have committed ”.big sins; as for the doers of good, there shall be no difficulty for them

He was asked: “O son of the Messenger of Allah! How can the intercession be for those who would have committed big

,sins, while Allah says

;(and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves (۲۱:۲۸

"?and a committer of big sins cannot be approved

He (a.s.) said: "No believer commits a sin but he regrets it and feels ashamed. And the Prophet has said: 'Enough is regret as repentance.' And also he (s.a.w.a.) has said: '.'Whoever is pleased by a good deed and displeased by a bad deed, he is a believer

Therefore, if there is someone who does not feel remorse for a sin he has committed, he is not a believer, and intercession will not avail him, and he will be an unjust one. :And Allah says

the unjust shall not have any true friend nor any intercessor who should be obeyed ".((۴۰:۱۸

It was said to him: "O son of the Messenger of Allah! How is it that he who is not sorry of a sin he has committed, he does not remain a believer?" He said: "Anyone who commits a big sin, knowing that he must be punished for it, will certainly feel remorse for what he has done. And as soon as he is sorry, he is repentant, eligible for .intercession

But if he is not sorry, then he is persisting in it, and a persistent (sinner) is not forgiven, because he does not believe in the punishment of what he has done; had he believed :in that punishment, he would have been sorry. And the Prophet has said

No big sin abides with apologizing, and no small sin remains (small) with`

persistence.' And as for the words of Allah, and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves, it means that they do not intercede except for him whose religion .He approves

Religion is an acknowledgement that good and bad deeds have to be recompensed. If one's religion were approved, one would feel remorse for the sins one would have committed, because he would know what their result would be on the (day of) resur- (rection."(۱)

The author says: The words of the Imam, "and he will be an unjust one": It gives the definition of "unjust" as applicable on the Day of Resurrection. It alludes to the ,Qur'anic verse

Then a crier will cry out among them that the curse of Allah is on the unjust, who hinder (people) from Allah's way and seek to make it crooked and they are .(disbelievers in the hereafter (۷:۴۴-۴۵

Accordingly, unjust is he who does not believe in the Day of Judgement; naturally, such a man would not be sorry if he neglected to do what he was ordered to do, or if .he indulged in sins and crimes

May be, he outright rejects basic truths and teachings of religion; or may be he just does not care, is not worried of punishment of sins on the Day of Reckoning. In later case, his verbal acknowledgement of the Day of Judgement would be but a joke and .mockery

as soon as he is sorry, he is repentant, eligible for intercession": The adjective, . . ." repentant, is not

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۱- at-Tawhīd

used here in its well-known terminological sense - repentance (in the terminological sense) is by itself the best intercessor and saviour.

What the Imam meant here is this: If he feels remorse for the sin committed, he returns to Allah, his religion is thus approved by Him, and therefore he becomes eligible for intercession.

And the Prophet has said: `No big sin abides with apologizing . . .'”: The Imam“ narrated this tradition to prove that persistence in a sin (even a small one) changes it from its original smallness to a far greater transgression - it shows one's disbelief in the Day of Judgement and injustice towards the signs of Allah. And such a thing is not forgiven.

A sin is forgiven if the sinner sincerely repents, or if intercession avails him - and this depends on his religion being approved; and both repentance and approved religion are absent in case of persistence.

A similar theme is found in a tradition quoted in `Ilalulu 'shshara'i' from Abū Ishaq al-Laythī that he said: “I said to Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn `Alī al-Baqir (a.s.): 'O son of the Messenger of Allah! Tell me about a believer, possessing religious understanding when he reaches (a high point in) knowledge and becomes perfect, does he commit fornication?' He said: 'By God! No.' I said: 'Then does he indulge in sodomy?'

He said: 'By God! No.' I said: 'Then does he steal?' He said: 'No.' I said: `Then does he drink intoxicant?' He said: 'No.' I said: `Then does he

:commit any of the big sins or indulge in any of these indecencies?' He said

No.' I said: 'Then does he commit a sin?' He said: 'Yes, and he is a believer, sinner,' submissive.' I said: `What does submissive mean?' He said: `The submissive (servant) " '. . . does not persist in it, does not keep doing it

ar-Rīda (a.s.) narrated through his forefathers that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: "When the resurrection comes, Allah, Great and Mighty is He, will manifest Himself to His believing servant, and will remind him of his sins one by one; then Allah will forgive him; Allah will not let (even) a near angel or an apostle prophet know of his (sins), and will cover it lest anyone becomes aware of it. Then He will say to his bad (deeds: 'Be good deeds.' " (۱)

Abu Dharr said: "The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: 'A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection; and it will be said: "Show him his small sins; and keep back from :him his big sins." Then it will be said to him

You did so and so on such and such a day." And he will go on confessing, while" apprehensive of his big sins. Then it will be said: "Give him a good deed in place of every bad deed." Then he will say: "I had done some sins which I do not see (mentioned) here."' " Abu Dharr said: "And I saw the Messenger of Allah laughing

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۱- al-Khisal

(until his teeth were shown."(1)

As-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "When the Day of Resurrection comes, Allah, Glorified and (Sublime is He, shall spread His mercy until even Iblīs will hope for His mercy."(2)

The author says: The last three Tradition are of general nature. The Tradition about intercession of the Prophet, emanating from the Imams of Ahlu '1-bayt as well as from the Sunni sources have successively been narrated by so many narrators as to .leave no room for any doubt about their authenticity

Altogether they prove that intercession will take place, and that it will avail the believers who might have committed sins; it will prevent them from entering into hell, or will rescue them from it if already sent therein. It is however certain that the sinning believers shall not be allowed to abide for ever in the hell. And we have earlier .explained that the Qur'an too does not say more than this

A Philosophical Contemplation

According to Abū `Alī Ibn Sina, intellectual reasoning cannot give us details concerning the resurrection and judgement (as given in the Qur'an and sunnah), as it lacks the premises necessary to lead to a conclusion. Nevertheless, it may contemplate the future of man after the soul leaves the body and lives in the form of (Platonic) ideas - how it proceeds on the path of happiness or unhappiness reaching the ultimate .station

Whatever man does in beginning leaves an imprint on his psyche - either of happiness or unhappiness. By "happiness" we mean what is good for him as

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1- Muslim

2- al-Amalī, as-Sadūq

a man; on the other hand, “unhappiness” denotes what is bad for him as a man. If the action is repeatedly performed the imprint becomes deeper and deeper until it .becomes a deep-rooted characteristic, until it reshapes the psyche in its own mould

If the mould is good, the resulting shape as well as the actions emanating from it are good and agreeable to the man “as a man”, and man is “happy”. If on the contrary the mould is bad, the resulting shape and actions become ugly and disagreeable to the man “as a man”; and although the deformed psyche seemingly enjoys those actions, .”in reality it remains unhappy “as a man

Here we are talking about a man who is happy in his psyche and good in his deed vis-.a-vis a man who is unhappy in his psyche and evil in his deeds

It is the former that is the subject of our discussion here. A man may be good and happy in his person, because he has got correct belief of eternal truth; but his psyche has been polluted by the sins and transgressions committed as a result of weakness of flesh and error of judgement and choice. Consequently, psyche becomes .”“unhappy

But this pollution and unhappiness is a matter of constraint that has been forced on his inherently happy psyche; and we know from intellectual reasoning that constraint .does not continue for ever

That soul will most certainly get rid of that unhappiness, pollution and rust in the fire of chastisement

in al-Barzakh or on the Day of Judgement - it depends on its own strength and stage .of inner perfection

The opposite is true for the later group. Whatever the effects of good deeds, they are no more than cosmetics; it is a forced appearance not agreeable to its inner-self; and .sooner or later it is bound to disappear

There remains a fifth category: The soul which could not turn its potentials into achievements - good or bad - in this life. They will remain in suspense, waiting for the .divine judgement

This much could be discerned from intellectual reasoning, concerning the reward and .punishment, the inseparable results of the deeds

Reasons also prove that existence has various grades of perfection - ideally perfect or less so, stronger or weaker. Consequently, the souls have various ranks in relation .to the Creator - nearer to, or further from him

They are therefore one above the other, the highest being the nearest to the First Cause. They are the most perfect and ideal souls, like those of the prophets (may peace of Allah be on them!). They may become the mediums through which the unnatural pollution and rust may be removed from the weaker souls which are further .below. It is this role which we call intercession

A Social Discourse

Some people say: "Human society cannot continue without some laid rules, nor without an authority to look after its affairs. When all members maintain discipline and .obey the rules, social justice is maintained and strengthened

This system is based on temporal benefits

which the society cannot do without, as well as on spiritual and ethical ideals, like truth, sincerity, keeping one's word etc. which the development and good of the .society depend upon

For these rules and regulations to have any force and effect, it was necessary for them to be accompanied by punishment laid down for the transgressors. Only in this way the system could be protected against the willful transgression of some and .indifference and negligence of others

That is why when a government (no matter which ideology it follows) is strong and capable enough to make people obey its edicts, the country marches forward, and society proceeds on the path of development. On the contrary when it is weak, the country is overcome by lawlessness and disorder, and plagued by troubles and .turmoil

In view of the above, it is essential for the good of society to make people believe" that they could not escape the consequences if they transgressed the law. Nothing should be said or done to raise a hope in them that they could avoid the punishment .by some means, like intercession, bribe or deception

The biggest objection against Christianity is aimed at its belief of atonement: That" Christ was crucified in order to atone for the sins of his followers. Now the Christians rely on that atonement to get salvation in the next world, without caring what they do .in this life

Religion, in this way, destroys the very foundation of society, retards civilization and pulls it backwards. Data show

that lie and injustice is found in ardent followers of religion to a far greater extent than in those who do not follow any religion. Its only reason is that the former are ”.confident that their sins would certainly be wiped off through intercession

This is in short what some “scholars” hold against the belief of intercession: That it weakens the foundation of civilization and social justice. But neither Islam proves intercession, in the meaning they have given it, nor the intercession which Islam .speaks of gives the result they have claimed

Before writing against intercession, as taught by Islam, they should learn what Islam teaches, how it applies its laws to the society, what type of intercession it promises :and how, when and to what extent it is to be applied and effected

First: What the Qur'an confirms of the intercession is this: The believers shall not abide in the hell, on the Day of Resurrection, provided they come to their Lord with approved belief and true faith. Thus, it is a conditional promise. Then it has emphasized that the faith remains in grave danger from sins, especially the big ones, .and more particularly if one persists in them

Such a believer would be tottering on the brink of eternal damnation. When a believer remembers that promise, his hope of deliverance soars high; when he needs this .warning, he is overcome by dread of perdition

His soul remains hovering between hope and fear; he worships his Lord both with love and awe. Thus, he

spends his life in a moderate way, on the middle course. He experiences neither .discouragement of pessimism, nor the rashness of over-optimism

Second: Islam has made comprehensive laws for temporal and spiritual upliftment of the society; these laws cover all aspects of life of an individual and a group. It has prescribed suitable punishments for those who violate any of those rules - from monetary compensation to chastisement to firmly fixed punishment - until a stage comes when the offender is deprived of his rights as a member of society and is .condemned to eternal shame, or even death

اولو) All this system has been entrusted into the hands of divinely appointed ulu 'l-amr people vested with authority). Then each Muslim has been made responsible, for = الأمر all other Muslims, as he is obliged to enjoin his compatriots, to do good and desist .from evil

To cap it all, the Muslim nation is obliged to call others to the right path, and the way to affect this call is to give them good news of eternal reward if they do good and to .warn them of eternal perdition if they indulge in evil

It is this knowledge of this and the next world which is the foundation of Islam's character-building. The Prophet promulgated this system; and experiment has proved its effectiveness and potency. Its power to mould the society into divine image was proved during the time of the Prophet and continued to do so until Umayyids .came into power

They made thesharī`ah a

toy to play with; put the Islam's penal code in cold storage and behaved as though they were above all law, as if nothing could hinder them in their pursuit of pleasure. The result of that exercise is before our eyes today. The standard of “freedom” has been raised; western civilization is making inroads in our society. In Islamic countries, .Islam exists in name only

It is this manifest weakening of religion and this retrogressive movement of the Muslims which has caused their fall from heights of justice and virtue, and made them slip down the plane of morality and ethics. It is their debauchery and their wallowing in their base desires and sensualities that has made them bold to transgress every limit, to violate every rule, so much so that even the atheists look down at their .debauchery, dishonesty and immorality

This is the real and only cause of the deterioration of Muslim society. The objector is completely off the mark when he attributes this state of affairs to those sublime religious realities whose only aim, and only effect, was and is the man's felicity and .happiness in this world as well as in the hereafter

The data, mentioned in his argument, are irrelevant here. They have looked at a Muslim society which has got no guardian and no authority to enforce Islamic laws within its jurisdiction, and at an atheist society which has a strong authority to enforce its laws and to keep the people within the limits, with help of

education and training of its own choice. Therefore, this comparison is quite clearly .unjustified

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۴۹–۶۱

point

(۴۹) وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُم مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوَءَ الْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءكُمْ وَفِى ذَلِكُم بَلاء مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ

(۵۰) وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ

(۵۱) وَإِذْ وَاعَدْنَا مُوسَى أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَنتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

(۵۲) ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنكُمِ مِّن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

(۵۳) وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

(۵۴) وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُواْ إِلَى بَارِئِكُمْ فَاقْتُلُواْ أَنفُسَكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِندَ
بَارِئِكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

(۵۵) وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى لَن نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى نَرَى اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ

(۵۶) ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُم مِّن بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

(۵۷) وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوَى كُلُواْ مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَـكِن كَانُواْ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

(۵۸) وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُواْ هَـذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُواْ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَداً وَادْخُلُواْ الْبَابَ سُجَّداً وَقُولُواْ حِطَّةٌ نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَايَاكُمْ وَسَنَزِيدُ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ

(۵۹) فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ قَوْلاً غَيْرَ الَّذِى قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ رِجْزاً مِّنَ السَّمَاء بِمَا كَانُواْ يَفْسُقُونَ

(۶۰) وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقَى مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِب بِّعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْناً قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ كُلُواْ وَاشْرَبُواْ
مِن رِّزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلاَ تَعْثَوْاْ فِى الأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

(۶۱) وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى لَن نَّصْبِرَ عَلَىَ طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنبِتُ الأَرْضُ مِن بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّآئِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا
وَبَصَلِهَا قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِى هُوَ أَدْنَى بِالَّذِى هُوَ خَيْرٌ اهْبِطُواْ مِصْراً فَإِنَّ لَكُم مَّا سَأَلْتُمْ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَآؤُوْاْ
بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ

بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُواْ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَواْ وَّكَانُواْ يَعْتَدُونَ

And when We delivered you from Pharaoh's people, who subjected you to severe torment, killing your sons and sparing your women, and in this there was a great trial .(from your Lord (۴۹

And when We parted the sea for you, so We saved you and drowned the followers of .(Pharaoh while you watched by (۵۰

And when We appointed (a time of) forty nights with Mūsa, then you took the calf (for ; (a god) after him and you were unjust (۵۱

.(then We pardoned you after that so that you might give thanks (۵۲

.(And when We gave Mūsa the book and the distinction that you might walk aright (۵۳

And when Mūsa said to his people: "O my people! you have surely been unjust to yourselves by taking the calf (for a god), therefore turn to your Creator (penitently) and kill your people, that is best for you with your Creator; so He turned to you .((mercifully),for surely He is the Oftreturning (with mercy), the Merciful" (۵۴

And when you said: "O Mūsa! we will not believe in you until we see Allah manifestly, " ;(so the punishment overtook you while you looked on (۵۵

.(then We raised you up after your death that you may give thanks (۵۶

And We made the clouds to give shade over you and We sent to you manna and quails: Eat of good things that We have given you; and they did not do Us

.(any harm, but they did harm their own selves (۵۷

And when We said: “Enter this city, then eat from it a plenteous (food)wherever you wish, and enter the gate making obeisance, and say, forgiveness, We will forgive you .(your wrongs and give more to those who do good (to others) (۵۸

But those who were unjust changed it for a saying other than that which had been spoken to them, so We sent upon those who were unjust a pestilence from heaven, .(because they transgressed (۵۹

And when Mūsa prayed for drink for his people, We said: “Strike the rock with your staff.” So there gushed from it twelve springs; each tribe knew its drinking place: “Eat and drink of the provisions of Allah and do not act corruptly in the land, making mis- .(chief” (۶۰

And when you said: “O Mūsa! we cannot bear with one food, therefore pray to your Lord on our behalf to bring forth for us out of what the earth grows, of its herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions. He said: “Will you exchange that which is better for that which is worse? Enter a city, so you will have what you ask for. ” And abasement and humiliation were brought down upon them and they returned with Allah's wrath; this was so because they disbelieved in the signs of Allah and killed the prophets unjustly; this was so because they disobeyed and exceeded .(the limits (۶۱

Commentary

:Qur’an: and sparing your women

They left your women alive in order that they (i.e. the women) might serve them. "al-means to wish someone to remain alive. The word may also mean: (الاستحیآء) '" Istihya They behaved indecently with the women until they (i.e. the women) lost their .modesty

translated here as "they subjected you to", literally means, (یسومونکم) "Yasūmūnakum" .they imposed upon you

'is opposite of al-jam (الفرْق) Qur'an: And when We parted the sea for you: al-Farq the words mean to separate and to gather, respectively. The same is the case ;(الجَمْع) To separate the sea means to part its water. .(الوَصْل)"vis-a-vis "al-wasl (الفَصْل) of al-fasl translated here as "for you", may also mean, "Soon on your entering the ,(بِکُم) ""Bikum ."sea

Qur'an: And when We appointed (a time of) forty days with Mūsa: The same event has :been described in Chapter ٧ in these words

And We appointed with Mūsa a time of thirty nights and completed them with .(ten(more), so the appointed time of his Lord was complete, forty nights (٧ :١۴٢

This verse mentions the total duration of the two promises together, as a tradition .says

is one of the (البـاریء) 'Qur'an: therefore turn to your Creator (penitently): al-Bari :beautiful names of Allah, as Allah says

He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most beautiful names. . . .((۵٩:٢۴

This name has been used three times in the Qur'an: twice in the verse under discussion and once in Chapter ۵٩, quoted just above. Perhaps Allah used this name here because it was most suitable

.in the context of the event described

the = الموجِد) the Creator) and al-Mūjid = الخالق) While it is nearer in meaning to al-Khaliq he separated, he = بَرَءَ يَــــبْرَءُ بَرَءً) Inventor), it is derived from bara'a, yabra'u, bar'an .(separates, to separate

Allah thus separates His creation from inexistence, or He separates man from the earth. This name in this context conveys the following idea: No doubt it is very hard to repent by killing your own people. But Allah, Who now orders you to destroy yourselves by killing, is the same God who had created you. He was pleased to create you when it was good for you; and now He has decreed that you should kill your own .people, and this order too is good for you

How can He decide anything for you except that which is good, and He is your Maker and Creator. The phrase, "your Creator", points to a special relation which they have with Him, and it emphasizes the fact that the given command is not for revenge; it is .based on divine love, in order to purify them

Qur'an: that is best for you with your Creator: This and the preceding verses (that enumerate their transgressions and sins) are addressed to the whole Jewish nation, although the sins were committed by only some groups of them and not by all. Obviously it is because they were very much united as a nation; if one did a thing, .others were pleased with it

It was because of this

feeling of their national unity that one group's action is attributed to the whole nation. Otherwise, not all the Israelites had killed the prophets, nor had all of them indulged in .the calf-worship, or committed other sins mentioned herein

It proves that the order, “kill your people”, actually meant, kill some of your people, i.e., the calf-worshippers. It may also be inferred from the words, “you have surely been unjust to yourselves by taking the calf for worship”, and the words, “that is best .(for you with your Creator” (which apparently is the final part of the speech of Mūsa

The words, “so He turned to you (mercifully)”, prove that their repentance was accepted. Tradition says that their repentance was accepted and sin forgiven when .only a few of them had been killed

This forgiveness before the order was fully complied with shows that the command was given as a trial. The case is somewhat similar to the dream of Ibrahīm (a.s.) and his being told to sacrifice Isma'īl; before he could reach the ultimate stage, he was ,told

.(O Ibrahīm! You have indeed made the vision come true (۳۷:۱۰۴ -۱۰۵

Likewise, Mūsa (a.s.) told his people “turn to your Creator (penitently) and kill your people, that is best for you with your Creator”, and Allah confirmed the order, yet He took the killing of some as equal to the execution of all, and informed them that their .”(repentance was accepted, “so He turned to you (mercifully

.(punishment = الرجز) ”Qur’an: a pestilence from heaven: “ar-Rijz

:Qur’an

(العيْث، is derived fromal-`ayth and al-`athy (لا تعثَوا) "do not act corruptly: "La ta'thaw .it means the biggest chaos and mischief (العَثى

is (الفوم "is cucumber; "al-fum (الخِيار) "Qur'an: and its cucumbers and its garlic: "al-Khiyar .garlic or wheat

.(they returned = باءوا) "Qur'an: and they returned with Allah's wrath: "Ba'ū

Qur'an: this was so because they disbelieved: It gives the reason of preceding statement; and the next sentence, "this was so because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits" is the reason of that reason. Their disobedience and perennial excesses caused them to reject the signs of Allah and kill the prophets. Allah says in :another verse

Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the signs of Allah .(and used to mock them (۳۰:۱۰

How was the disbelief caused by disobedience? One of the coming Tradition explains .it

Tradition

Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: and when We appointed (a time of) forty nights with Mūsa: "It was thirty nights in the (divine) knowledge and measure, then something else happened (to show that it was not the final decree) and Allah added ten more; and in this way the appointed time of his Lord, the first and the last, (was completed forty days."(۱

The author says: This tradition supports what we have mentioned earlier that the .forty was the total of the two appointed times

Alī (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: and when Mūsa said to his people: "، my` .people! you have surely been unjust to yourselves

al-`Ayyashī -١

They asked Mūsa: `How should we repent?' He said: `Some of you should kill the“ :” . . '.others

Thereupon, they took the knives and everyone started killing (the others), even his brother, father and son, without caring, by God! whom he killed. (It continued) till seventy thousand of them were killed. Then Allah revealed to Mūsa: `Tell them to stay their hands;' and he who was killed was forgiven and he who remained, his (repentance was accepted. "(١

The Imam said: “Mūsa (a.s.) went to the appointed place and time, and then came back to his people; and they had started worshipping the calf; then he told them: 'O my people! you have surely been unjust to yourselves by taking the calf (for worship), therefore turn to your Creator (penitently) and kill your people, that is best for you '.with your Creator

They asked him: `How should we kill our people?' Mūsa said to them: `Tomorrow everyone of you should come to Baytu 'l-Maqdis(٢) with a knife or a piece of iron or a sword; when I ascend the pulpit of the Children of Israel you should all keep your faces hidden, so that nobody should recognize the other at his side; then you should kill each other.' Thus seventy thousand of those who had worshipped the calf .assembled in Baytu 'l-Maqdis

When Musa finished praying with them and ascended the pulpit, they started killing each other. (This continued) until Jibrīl came down and said: `Now tell them, O Mūsa! to stop killing

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ad-Durru 'l-manthūr -١

Mūsa was called to the Mount Sini'i and given Torah while the Israelites were still in -٢ the wilderness. And it was at that time that the events in question took place. They had not entered Palestine at that time and Baytu 'l-Maqdis was not built yet. Therefore, the word “Baytu 'l-Maqdis” used in this tradition must mean the tent which .Mūsa erected for divine worship

'.each other), because Allah has accepted their repentance)

And (by that time) ten thousand of them had been killed. And Allah revealed: that is best for you with your Creator; so He turned to you (mercifully), for surely His is Oft... (returning (with mercy), the Merciful. "(١)

The author says: According to this tradition, the sentence, "that is best for you with your Creator", was said by Mūsa (a.s.) and was also used in the divine speech. In this way, Allah confirmed the word of Mūsa (a.s.), and made it clear that what had actually happened - the execution of ten thousand calf-worshippers - was all that was intended from the very beginning; and that the order of Musa was carried out in full, .and not partially

According to what appears from the wording of Mūsa (a.s.) , it was best for them if all of them were killed; but only some of them got killed, not all. By repeating the same words, Allah made it clear that what Mūsa (a.s.) had meant from the words, "the best .for you", was not the execution of all

The same at-Tafsīr says about the words of Allah: and We made the clouds to give shade over you: "When Mūsa crossed the sea with the Israelites, they landed at a desert. They said: 'O Mūsa! you have really destroyed and killed us, by bringing us from an inhabited land to a desert where there is, either any shadow or tree nor even '.water

At daytime a cloud appeared over

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at-Tafsīr, al-Qummi -١

them to protect them from the sun; and at right, manna came down to them, settling on leaves, trees and stones, and they ate it; and at dinner time roasted birds fell on their dinner-spread, and when they finished eating and drinking, the birds (became alive and) flew away.

And Mūsa had a stone which he used to place in the midst of the station (of the caravan), striking it with his walking-stick and, lo! Twelve springs gushed from it, as Allah described, every spring going to the station of a particular tribe - and they were twelve tribes."(١)

Abu l-Hasan al-Madī (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: and they did not do Us any harm but they did harm their own selves: "Surely Allah is too powerful and too unassailable to be harmed or to ascribe any harm to Himself.

But He has joined us to Himself and took any injustice done to us as an injustice done to Him, and treated our love as His love; then He revealed it in a (verse of the) Qur'an to His Prophet, and said: and they did not do Us any harm, but they did harm their own selves. The narrator says: "I said, `This is the revelation?' He said, `Yes."(٢)

The author says: Nearly the same thing has been narrated from al-Baqir (a.s.).

"... too unassailable to be harmed": It is the explanation of the Qur'anic expression, "they did not do Us any harm"; the next sentence, "or to ascribe any

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١- at-Tafsīr, al-Qummi

٢- al- Kafi

harm to Himself", rejects also the opposite proposition. Allah can neither be harmed nor does He do any injustice Himself. Why did the narrator ask the question, "This is "?the revelation

Obviously, for a negative sentence to be plausible there should be a real or hypothetic possibility of a positive connection between the subject and its predicate. We do not say, "This wall does not see". Why? Because wall has no possible connection with .seeing. Now, Allah can have no possible connection at all with injustice or oppression

Therefore, the sentence, "they did not do Us any harm", would seem a superfluous and implausible assertion, because there was no need for saying that Allah could not be harmed nor did He harm anyone – unless it was meant to convey some fine point .to the listeners

And that point is this: Great persons often speak on behalf of their servants and dependants; likewise, Allah in this verse is speaking on behalf of Muhammad and his .progeny (peace be on them all), joining them to Himself in this declaration

as-Sadiq (a.s.) recited the verse: this was so because they disbelieved in the signs of Allah and killed the prophets unjustly; this was so because they disobeyed and :exceeded the limits, and then said

By God, they did not hit them with their hands, nor did they kill them with their" swords; but they heard their talks and announced it (to their enemies); so the ,prophets were caught on that charge and killed; this was the killing

(the exceeding the limit and the disobedience."(1)

The author says: A similar tradition from the same Imam is found in al-Kafi. Apparently, the Imam inferred it from the words, "this was so because they disobeyed . . ." Needless to say that murder, and especially of the prophets, and rejection of the signs of Allah cannot be termed as mere disobedience.

It should be the other way round. But if we take the disobedience to mean disclosing the secrets then it would be perfectly right to say that they killed the prophets, because they (disobeyed them and) did not keep their secrets and thus delivered them into the hands of their enemies who killed them.

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۶۲

point

(۶۲) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَالَّذِينَ هَادُواْ وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabaeans, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve (۶۲).

Commentary

The verse first mentions the believers, and then says, "whoever believes in Allah . . ." The context shows that the latter phrase refers to the real belief, the true iman, and that the word, "those who believe", (mentioned at first) refers to those who call themselves believers.

The verse says that Allah gives no importance to names, like the believers, the Jews, the Christians or the

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1- al-`Ayyashī

Sabaeans. One cannot get a reward from Allah, nor can he be saved from :punishment, merely by giving oneself good titles, as they, for example, claim that

.(no one will enter the Garden except he who was a Jew or a Christian (۲:۱۱۱

The only criterion, the only standard, of honour and happiness is the real belief in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, accompanied by good deeds. It should be noted that Allah did not say, 'whoever of them believes'; otherwise it would have accorded some recognition to these titles, and would have implied that there was, after all, some .benefit in acquiring these names

This theme has been repeatedly expounded in the Qur'an. The honour and felicity depend entirely on true and sincere servitude; no name, no adjective, can do any .good unless it is backed by correct belief and good deeds

This rule is applicable to all human beings, right from the prophets to the lowest rank. Look how Allah praises His prophets with all beautiful and excellent attributes, and :then says

and if they had set up others (with Him) certainly what they did would have become .(ineffectual for them (۶:۸۸

Also, He describes the high status and great prestige of the Holy Prophet and his :companions, and then ends it with these words

Allah has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a .(great reward (۴۸:۲۹

."Ponder on the significance of the phrase "among them

Then we find that Allah had given a man some of His signs but he

:went astray

and if We had pleased, We would certainly have exalted him thereby, but he clung to the earth and followed his low desire . . . (٧:١٧۶).

There are many verses clearly showing that the honour and respect with Allah depends on reality, not on appearance.

Tradition

Salman al-Farisi said: “I asked the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about the people of that religion which I followed (prior to Islam), and I described their (way of) prayer and worship. Then it was revealed: Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews. . . ”(١)

The author says: Various other Tradition with different chains of narrators, say that this verse was revealed about the people of Salman.

Ibn Faddal said: “I asked ar-Rida (a.s.) why “an-Nasara” (النصارى = the Christians) were given that name. He said: “Because they were from a village called an-Nasirah (الناصره = Nazarath) in Syria.(٢) Maryam and `Isa settled there after they returned from Egypt.”(٣)

The author says: We shall comment on this tradition when writing on the stories of `Isa (a.s.) in Chapter ٣ (The House of `Imran), God willing.

The same tradition says that “al-Yahūd” (اليهود = the Jews) got this name because they are descended from Yahūda, son of Ya'qūb.(۴)

The Imam said: “The Sabaeans are a people, neither Zoroastrian nor Jews, neither Christians nor Muslims; they worship the stars and planets.(۵)

The author says: It is idol-worship of a special type; they worshipped only the idols of the stars, while others worshipped whatever idol caught their fancy.

A Historical Discussion

Abū Rayhan at-Bīrūnī writes in his book

۱- ad-Durru 'l-manthūr

۲- In those days, all the land now divided into Syria, Jordan, Lebnon and Palestine, was called Syria or Greater Syria.

۳- Ma`ani '۱-akhbar

۴- Ma`ani '۱-akhbar

۵- at-Tafsir, al-Qummi

:al- 'atharu 'l-baqiyah

The earliest known among them (i.e., the claimants of prophethood was Yudhasaf.(۱)"
He appeared in India at the end of the first year of the reign of Tahmurth; and he brought the Persian script. He called to the Sabaean religion, and a great many people .followed him

The Bishdadian kings and some of the Kayanis who resided in Balkh held the sun, the moon, the stars and the planets together with other elements in high esteem and .believed that these luminaries were very sacred

It continued until Zoroaster appeared at the end of the thirtieth year of Peshtasav's reign. The remnants of those Sabaeans are now in Harran, from which they have got .their new name, Harraniyyah

Also it is said that this nomenclature refers to Haran, son of Tarukh (Terah) and brother of Ibrahīm (a.s.), as he allegedly was one of their religious leaders and its .staunchest follower

Ibn Sancala, the Christian, has written a book against Sabaeans. In that book he has" attributed many ridiculous things to this Haran. For example, he describes the :Sabaeans' belief about Ibrahīm (a.s.) in these words

Ibrahīm (a.s.) was removed from their community because a white spot had" appeared on his foreskin, and the Sabaeans believed that a person having a white spot was unclean, and avoided mixing with such person. To remove that defect, Ibrahīm cut his foreskin, i.e. circumcised himself. Then he entered one of the temples; :and lo! an idol called out to him

O Ibrahīm! You went away from us with one"

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۱ - It is now almost certain that Yudhasaf is a corruption of Budhastav, the title of .Gautama Buddha, the founder of Bhuddhism

defect and came back with two; get out and do not ever come back to us." Ibrahīm was enraged; he smashed the idols; and went out. After some time, he felt remorse for what he had done, and decided to sacrifice his son on the altar of Jupiter, as it was their custom to kill their children to please the deities. When Jupiter was convinced of the sincerity of his repentance, it sent a lamb to him to slaughter in place of his son."

" Abdu 'l-Masīh ibn Ishaq al-Kindī wrote a book in reply of a book by 'Abdullah ibn' Isma'īl al-Hashimī. In that book `Abdu 'l-Masīh writes about the Sabaeans:

"'It is generally believed that they indulge in human sacrifice, although nowadays they cannot do so openly. But so far as our own information goes, they are monotheists who believe that God is free from every defect and evil, they describe God in negative, not positive, terms; for example, they say:

Allah cannot be defined or seen, He is not unjust or oppressive. According to them, the beautiful divine names may be used for God, but only in an allegorical sense, because no divine attribute can truly describe the reality.

They believe that the management of all affairs is done and controlled by the sky and the heavenly bodies; the sky and those bodies are living things having the characteristics of speech, hearing and sight.

They revere the light and the luminaries. One of their legacies is the dome above the niche in

the Umayyid mosque of Damascus; it was their prayer house, and at that time even the Greeks and the Romans followed the same religion. Then it came under Jewish control and they turned it into a synagogue. Later, the Christians took it over and .converted it into a church

Then came the Muslims, and they changed it into a mosque. The Sabaeans had their numerous places of worships, and their idols were named after various names of the sun, and shaped with fixed patterns, as has been described by Abu Ma'shar al-Balkhi .in his book, The Houses of Worship

For example, there was the temple of Ba'lbak which housed the idol of the sun; of Qiran, which was related to the moon and built in the moon's shape, like a shawl worn over head and shoulders. And there is a village nearby, Salamsīn by name; it is a corruption of its original name, صنَم سين (Sanam Sīn = the idol of the moon).

Likewise, another village is called Tara'ūz, that is, the gate of Venus. They do also claim that the Ka'bah and its idols belonged to them, and that the Meccan idol-worshippers were of the Sabaean religion. According to them the idols, Lat and `Uzza, .represented Saturn and Venus

They have many prophets in their hierarchy, most of them being the Greek philosophers, for example, Hermes of Egypt, Agadhimun, Walles, Pythagoras and .Babaswar (maternal grandfather of Plato) and many others like them

Some of them do not eat fish - lest it be

p: ۳۸۷

spume; nor poultry, because it is always hot. Also, they do not use garlic, because it creates headache and burns the blood and semen (which is the source of continuity of the human race); and they avoid beans, because it dulls the intelligence and also .because it had first sprouted in a human skull

They observe three compulsory prayers: at sunrise (eight rak `at); at noon (five rak .`at) ; and at the third hour of the night

They prostrate three times in each rak `ah. Also, they observe two optional prayers'" .- at the second and ninth hours of the day

They pray with taharah and wudu '; they take bath after janabah; but they do not` " circumcise their children because they have not been told to do so. Most of their laws concerning marital and penal codes are like thesharī `ah of Islam; while the rules .about touching a dead body are similar to Torah's

They offer sacrifices to the stars, their idols and the temples; the sacrificial animals are killed by the priests and witch-doctors, who read in it the future of the man who .offers the sacrifice and answer to his questions

Hermes is sometimes called Idris, who is mentioned in Torah as Akhnukh. Some of' " .them say that Yudhasaf was Hermes

Some others have said that the present-day Varraniyyah are not the real Sabaeans;' " rather these are mentioned in the books as heathens and idolators. The Sabaeans were those Israelites who stayed behind at Babylon when their majority

.returned to Jeruselem in the reigns of Cyrus and Artaxerxes

They were favourably disposed to Zoroastrian beliefs, as well as to the religion of Nebuchadnezzar. What resulted from this exercise was a mixture of Judaism and .Zoroastrianism – like the Samaritans of Syria

Most of them are found in Wasit and the rural areas of Iraq around Ja'far and Jamidah; they trace their genealogy to Enosh, son of Seth. They criticize and oppose the Harraniyyah and their religion. With exception of a few things, there is no similarity between the two religions: The Sabaeans face towards the North Pole in .their prayers, while the Harraniyyah face towards the South Pole

Some people of the book have said that Methuselah had a son (other than Lamech),' " named Sabī, whom the Sabaeans have descended from. The people, before the sharī`ah spread and before Yudhasaf appeared on the scene, followed Samanian .beliefs; they lived in the eastern part of the world and worshipped idols

Their remnants are found in India, China and Taghazghaz, and the people of Khurasan call them Shamnan. Their relics, places of worship and idols are seen in eastern Khurasan adjoining India. They believe in eternity of the universe and transmigration of soul. According to them, the sky is falling down in an endless '.vacuum, and that is why it is moving round and round

According to some writers, a group of them rejects the theory of eternity of the" ".universe and says that it came into being one million year ago

:The author says

All the above description has been taken from the book of al-Biruni. The opinion, attributed to some writers, that Sabaeans' religion was a mixture of Judaism and Zoroastrianism flavoured with some elements of Harraniyyah's beliefs, seems better suited in this context; after all, the verse obviously enumerates the groups which .followed a divinely inspired religion

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۶۳-۷۴

point

(۶۳) وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُواْ مَا آتَيْنَاكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُواْ مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

(۶۴) ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُم مِّن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنتُم مِّنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

(۶۵) وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَواْ مِنكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُواْ قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ

(۶۶) فَجَعَلْنَاهَا نَكَالاً لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

(۶۷) وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُواْ بَقَرَةً قَالُواْ أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُواً قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

(۶۸) قَالُواْ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لاَّ فَارِضٌ وَلاَ بِكْرٌ عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُواْ مَا تُؤْمَرونَ

(۶۹) قَالُواْ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاء فَاقِـعٌ لَّوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ النَّاظِرِينَ

(۷۰) قَالُواْ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ البَقَرَ تَشَابَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّآ إِن شَاء اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ

(۷۱) قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لاَّ ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الأَرْضَ وَلاَ تَسْـقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَـلَّمَةٌ لاَّ شِيَةَ فِيهَا قَالُواْ الآنَ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبَحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُواْ يَفْعَلُونَ

(۷۲) وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْساً فَادَّارَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ

(۷۳) فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُحْيِي اللّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

(۷۴) ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُم مِّن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا

يَشَّقَقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاء وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّهِ وَمَا اللّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

And when We took a promise from you and lifted the mountain over you ": "Take hold of what We have given you with firmness and bear in mind what is in it, so that you .(may guard (against evil)" (۶۳

Then you turned back after that; so were it not for the grace of Allah and His mercy on .(you, you would certainly have been among the losers (۶۴

And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits of the .(Sabbath, so We said to them: "Be apes, despised and hated" (۶۵

So We made them an example to those who witnessed it and those who came after it, .(and an admonition to those who guard (against evil) (۶۶

And when Musa said to his people: "Surely Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow"; they said: "Do you ridicule us?" He said: "I seek the protection of Allah .(from being one of the ignorants" (۶۷

They said: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is". Musa said: "He says, Surely she is a cow neither advanced in age nor too young, of middle age .(between that (and this); do therefore what you are commanded "(۶۸

They said: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what her colour is." Musa said: "He says, surely she is a yellow cow; her colour is

.(intensely yellow, giving delight to the beholders" (۶۹

They said: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, for surely .(to us the cows are all alike, and if Allah please we shall surely be guided aright" (۷۰

Musa said: "He says, Surely she is a cow not made submissive that she should plough the land, nor does she irrigate the tilth, sound, without a blemish in her." The said: `Now you have brought the truth;" so they sacrificed her, though they had not the .(mind to do (it) (۷۱

And when you killed a man, then you disagreed with respect to that, and Allah was to .(bring forth that which you were going to hide (۷۲

So, We said: "Strike the (dead body) with part of the (sacrificed cow)", thus Allah brings .(the dead to life, and He shows you His signs so that you may understand (۷۳

Then your hearts hardened after that, so that they were like rocks, rather worse in hardness; and surely there are some rocks from which streams burst forth, and surely there are some of them which split asunder so water issues out of them, and surely there are some of them which fall down for fear of Allah, and Allah is not at all . (heedless of what you do (۷۴

Commentary

is mountain; that is why has (الطور) "Qur'an: And lifted the mountain over you: "at-Tur mountain) in verse: And when We wrested = الجَبَل) "been substituted by "al-jabal

"away the mountain over them as if it were a covering overhead (۷:۱۷۱). "an-Natq (النَّـتْق = to wrest away; to pull out).

The verse at first mentions taking of a promise; and ends with the command to take hold of what they were given and to bear in mind what was in it; in between it refers to the lifting of the mountain over them, without saying why it was lifted.

But the context clearly shows that it was done to frighten them without putting them under compulsion, in order that they might obey what they were told - if Allah had wished to compel them, there was no need to take any promise before.

Objection: If we were to take the sentence, "and lifted the mountain over you", in its literal meaning, it would be a miraculous sign that would have forced the Israelites to obey the given command under duress and coercion; but Allah says:

There is no compulsion in the religion (۲:۲۵۶);

. . . will you then force men till they become believers? (۱۰:۹۹).

Reply: The objection is baseless. The sentence shows only that they were threatened and frightened. Just lifting the mountain over their head was not enough to coerce and force them to believe and obey. Otherwise, most of the miracles shown by Musa (a.s.) could be termed as "compulsion"! The said questioner has tried to explain away this sentence in this way:

"The Israelites were at the foot of the mountain; it was shaken violently and during that convulsion its

summit loomed over them, until they thought that it was going to fall over them. It is this natural phenomenon that has been described as pulling out the mountain and ".lifting it over them

Such misinterpretations emanate from rejection of the principle of “miracle” altogether. We have already written in detail on this subject. If we were to explain away the verses of miracle in this way, no speech would remain safe from distortion; and no sentence could be taken to mean what it says; as a result, all the norms of .eloquence and literature would lose their value

is a particle meaning (لَـعَـلّ) "Qur’an: so that you may guard (against evil): “La'alla “perhaps”, “may be”; it denotes hope - the speaker may be hoping for something, or the person spoken who gives rise to the hope, or the situation justifies the hope .although the speaker or the listener does not feel optimistic himself

In any case, it implies some uncertainty about the final outcome. When this particle is used in a divine speech, it indicates hopefulness either with reference to the listener or in context of the situation; but it can never refer to the speaker, that is, Allah, because He can never be uncertain of any result. It has clearly been explained by ar-Raghib in his al-Mufradat. Therefore, whenever this word is used in the Qur'an, it is "... translated as “so that ...”, “in order that

.(despised, humiliated = خاسئين) "Qur’an: Be apes despised: “Khasi'īn

Qur’an: So

means exemplary punishment meted (النَّـكال) "We made them an example: "an-Nakal .out to one in order that others may desist from such transgression

Qur'an: And when Musa said to his people: "Surely Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow. . . ": This is the story of the cow of the Israelites, and it is these .verses which have given this chapter its name, the Cow

The Qur'an has used a dramatic style for this story. It opens with the middle of the story (verses ۶۷ to ۷۱), followed by its beginning (verse ۷۲) and ending with its .(conclusion (verse ۷۳

Another thing to note is the changes of the pronouns - upto verse ۶۶, the Israelites were directly addressed in second person; but verses ۶۷ to ۷۱ are addressed to the Prophet mentioning the Israelites in third person; then it reverts again to the original .(second person (verses ۷۲ - ۷۳

However, let us follow the narrative in the light of the Qur'an. Allah addresses the Prophet referring to the Israelites in third person: "And when Musa said to his people: ". . . `Surely Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow'; they said

Obviously the order given to sacrifice a cow with subsequent description of its various characteristics and qualities, contained in these five verses (۶۷ -۷۱) , is like a parenthetic statement which clarifies the meaning of the next two verses (۷۲ -۷۳), :addressed to the Israelites

And when you killed a man, then you disagreed with respect to"

that, and Allah was to bring forth that which you were going to hide. So We said: `Strike the (dead body) with part of the (sacrificed cow),' thus Allah brings the dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you may understand. "

The five verses (۶۷ -۷۱) also show how ill-mannered the Israelites were; how offensive their behaviour was towards their prophet. See how off-handedly they accused their prophet of speaking idle words, how arrogantly they made demand after demand of the Lord to make His command clear and plain, as though there was any ambiguity in the divine command or the prophetic utterance.

Add to it their insulting mode of referring to God: Musa had told them, "Surely Allah commands you . . ."; but they repeatedly used the words, "Call on your Lord for our sake . . .", as though He was not their Lord.

Then again they went on repeating the demand to be told "what she is", "what her colour is"; and when all was explained to them, they arrogantly claimed, "Surely to us the cows are all alike". It should be noted that they did not say that that particular cow seemed indistinct to them; they instead claimed that all the cows were alike in their eyes - implying that the cows per se were the same, and if a certain individual cow had some special quality, this much description was not enough for identification purpose; they did not realize that it was not

.the cow, but the divine will, which produced the desired result

They were given a simple command to sacrifice "a cow ", that is, any cow; they should have acted on that general unrestricted command, but they went on asking for more .and more particulars; this was in itself a height of arrogance

Then, look at their rudeness in asking their prophet, "Do you ridicule us?" It cast an aspersion on the prophet that he was, God forbid, an ignorant person who talked aimlessly. That is why he vehemently defended himself saying, "I seek the protection ."of Allah from being one of the ignorants

Even then, they had the temerity to say at the end of the story, "Now you have brought the truth", implying that the previous explanations were not "the truth", that !the preceding divine speech and prophetic messages were, God forbid, untruths

This story is not mentioned in the current Torah. Therefore, it was better not to address it to the Israelites. This may be another reason of changing the mode of address – the story was initially addressed to the Prophet, and after establishing the base, the pronouns were again changed to the original second person directly addressing the Israelites. Nevertheless, the Torah contains an order that implies that :some such events must have taken place

If one be found slain in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it," lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him: Then thy elders and

thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round :about him that is slain

And it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn the yoke: And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the :valley

And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the Lord the God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the Lord; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried. And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in -the valley

And they shall answer and say: Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be (forgiven them." (Deut., ٢١:١ - ٨

It must now be clear that the story as given here is not intended as a simple narrative. The main theme is taken up in verse ٧٢ (And when you killed a man . . .), but before that, a part of

the story is narrated to the Prophet in some detail in verses ۶۷ - ۷۱ for obvious .reasons

Let us now recapitulate what has been explained above, The verses ۶۷-۷۱(And when Musa said to his people: "Surely Allah commands you . . .), addressed to the Prophet, is a prologue to the forthcoming episode (verses ۷۲ - ۷۳), although the listeners do not .know it yet

As the audience does not know why the Israelites were told to sacrifice a cow, its curiosity is aroused and the suspense continues until the relation between the sacrifice of the cow and detection of the murderer is revealed. It was this apparent irrelevance of the former to the latter that prompted the Israelities to accuse Musa .(a.s.) of ridiculing them, of joking with them

This accusation showed that they were completely devoid of discipline, were very arrogant and disobedient. They were not inclined to obey any command without .knowing its why and wherefore

They were not ready to believe in that which they could not see - belief in the unseen :(.was against their grain. They were the people who had said to Musa (a.s

.(O Musa! we will not believe in you until we see Allah manifestly" (۲:۵۵"

Their trouble was that they wanted total independence in every affair, no matter whether it was within their domain or not. They erroneously thought that the unseen .could be brought down to the level of the seen

Consequently, they wanted to adopt a deity which they could see by their naked

:eyes

They said: “O Musa! make for us a god as they have (their) gods.,” He said: “Surely you .(are a people acting ignorantly” (۷:۱۳۸

No wonder that they did not understand the sublime status of their prophet Musa (a.s.) and thought that he, like themselves, followed his own desires and joked with, and ridiculed, the people. They accused him of joking and acting like ignorant ones. And Musa (a.s.) had to refute this charge: “I seek the protection of Allah from being .”one of the ignorants

Why did Musa (a.s.) seek the protection of Allah? Why did not he say straight away that he was not an ignorant person? It was because Musa (a.s.) preferred to rely on .the divine protection which cannot fail, rather than on his own virtues

The Israelites believed that one should not accept anything without proof. This principle is correct, of course. But they were mistaken in believing that man must know the reason of every order in full detail; that a command of general nature was not enough. That is why they went on asking for more and more detail about the cow .they were told to slaughter

They thought that the cow, by its nature, could not bring a dead body to life; if somewhere there was a particular cow possessing this unheard of quality, it should be pin-pointed with accurate and detailed description. It was this trend of thought which prompted them to say: “Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to

."us what she is

They unnecessarily put themselves into a corner; and Allah, on this uncalled for demand, gave them a few particulars; "Musa said: `He says, Surely she is a cow neither advanced in age (i.e. not passed the calf-bearing age) nor too young (i.e. not virgin, nor one that has not given birth to a calf yet) of middle age between that (and .means a female in middle of child-bearing age (العَوان) " this)." "al- 'Awan

Then their Lord took mercy on them and admonished them not to indulge in too much questioning, and to be content with that which they were told: "do therefore what you are commanded ". But they did not listen to the divine advice and said: " `Call on your :Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what her colour is.' Musa said

He says, surely she is a yellow cow; her colour is intensely yellow, giving delight to` the beholders.' "This much explanation should have been enough for them, as by then the cow's age and colour had been described to them. But no, it was not enough for the Israelites who unhesitatingly repeated their first question, shamelessly accusing :Musa - and God too - of not giving them clear description as yet

They said: `Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, for surely" to us the cows are all alike, and if Allah please we shall surely be guided aright.' "So, Allah further

:particularized her nature and characteristics, saying

Surely she is a cow not made submissive that she should plough land, nor does she“ irrigate the tilth”; and then He put a further restriction about her colour, “sound, without a blemish in her.” Now that they were given all the details and could not think ”.of any more questions, they said: “Now you have brought the truth

The sentence shows that they had to accept the command because they could not think of any more excuses to avoid it - but even then they put the blame of their previous disobedience on Musa - and by implication on Allah: that they had not complied with the order before because Musa (a.s.) and Allah had not explained it correctly. All this is implied in the last clause, “so they sacrificed her, though they had ”.(not the mind to do (it

Qur’an: And when you killed a man . . . : It is the beginning of the main story. “at-Tadaru' (التّـــدارء = 'translated here as “disagreed”) is derived form ad-dar (الـدّرء = repulse) and literally means to push one another. A man was killed and every group was disowning its responsibility, putting the blame on others. But Allah was to disclose .what they wanted to hide

Qur’an: So We said: “Strike the (dead body) with part of the (sacrificed cow)”: The Arabic text contains two pronouns -the first (masculine) refers to the dead body and the second (feminine) to the cow. The translation omits the pronouns

.replacing them with the nouns they stand for

Someone has denied the actuality of this story, suggesting that the verses simply describe the promulgation of a law (as given in the Deut., ۲۱:۱- ۸, quoted above). According to him, raising someone from the dead (mentioned in these verses) merely :means finding out the identity of the killer - as Allah says

.(And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation (۲:۱۷۹

In short, he claims that there was no miracle involved, nor was there any dead body brought back to life. But the context of the story leaves no room for such misinterpretation - especially if we look at the words, "So We said: `Strike the (dead ".body) with part of the (sacrificed cow)', thus Allah brings the dead to life

Qur'an: Then your hearts hardened after that, so that they were like rocks, rather sternness) in heart is like "hardness" in rock. = القَسوه) " worse in hardness: "al-Qaswah .(rather = بَل) or) is used here in the meaning of bal = أو) ""Aw

The next sentences show why their hearts were worse than rocks in hardness: "and surely there are some rocks from which streams burst forth". The sentence offers a contrast between rocks and water. Rocks are used as examples of hardness, while .water is proverbially used to denote softness

Even then, there are some rocks - with all their hardness - from which streams of water - with all its softness - burst forth; "and surely there are some of

them which split asunder so water issues out of them ": The hard rocks send forth the soft waters; but the Israelites' hearts were so hard as never to allow any truth to .issue out of them

Qur'an: and surely there are some of them which fall down for fear of Allah: We see how the rocks and stones fall down - big rocks on the summits of mountains crack up, .and then an ordinary earthquake is enough to dislodge them causing an avalanche

Also, the cracks fill up with ice and snow during winter, then the warmth of spring melts the ice sending the streams down the valleys. This phenomenon is related to its .natural causes, yet Allah says that the rocks fall down from fear of Allah

Why? Because all the natural causes ultimately return to the First Cause, that is, Allah. Rocks, when they fall down because of the natural causes, are in fact obeying the .divine decree which put them under the influence of those secondary causes

It may, therefore, be said that they understand the command of their Lord - an understanding that is created nature. They obey the decree of Allah inasmuch as they :are thus moulded by Him. Allah says

and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not ;(understand their glorification (۱۷:۴۴

.(all are obedient to Him (۲:۱۱۶

Fear too is based on perception, as are the glorifying and the obeying. It may therefore be said that the rocks fall down

:for fear of Allah. This sentence is of the same genre as the following ones

And the thunder declares His glory with His praise, and the angels too for awe of Him ;((۱۳:۱۳

And whoever is in the heavens and the earth makes obeisance to Allah only, willingly .(and unwillingly, and their shadows too at morn and eve (۱۳:۱۵

Here the sound of thunder has been counted as the declaration of divine glory and the shadow is said to prostrate for Allah. There are many verses of the same style and all .are based on the same analysis as mentioned above

However, the sentence, "and surely there are some of them which fall down for fear of Allah", further shows how the Jews' hearts were worse than rocks in hardness: The rocks are afraid of Allah and do fall down for His fear, but there is no fear of Allah in .the Jews' hearts, they are not afraid of divine wrath

Tradition

As -Sadiq (a.s.) was asked about the words of Allah: Take hold of what We have given you with firmness, whether it meant the strength of the bodies or the firm resolution (of the heart. He (a. s.) said: "Both together"(۱

.The author says: This tradition has also been narrated by al-`Ayyashī in his at-Tafsīr

Al-Halabi narrates in explanation of the words of Allah; and bear in mind what is in it, that he said: "Bear in mind what is in it and also bear in mind the chastisement that is (laid down for its negligence."(۲

The

۱- al -Mahdsin

۲- al-`Ayyashī

author says: It has been inferred from the position of this clause – it follows the threat .implied in lifting the mountain over them

Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: "If the children of Israel had not said: and if Allah please we shall surely be guided aright, they would have .(never been given (respite

And had they (in the beginning) taken any cow and slaughtered her; it would have been enough for them; but they went on pressing (for more and more particulars), so Allah made it harder (and harder) for them."(۱)

Ibn Faddal said: "I heard Abu '۱-Hasan (a.s.) saying: `Surely Allah ordered the children of Israel to slaughter a cow – and what they needed was its tail. (But they asked for more and more details) so Allah made it harder (and harder) for them.' "(۲)

al-Bazantī said: "I heard ar-Rida (a.s.) saying: `A man from the children of Israel killed one of his relatives, then he took the body and put it in the path (leading) to the best of .the Israelities' clans. Thereafter he came demanding (the revenge of) his blood

Musa (a.s.) was informed that such and such a clan had killed such and such a man, and he was asked to tell them who the killer was. Musa said: "Bring me a cow." They "?said: "Do you ridicule us

He said: "I seek the protection of Allah from being one of the ignorants. " And had they taken any cow, it would have

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۱- ad-Durru 'l-manthūr

۲- at-Tafsīr, al-Qummi

been enough for them, but they pressed (for more particulars); therefore Allah made .it harder for them

They said:"Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is" : Musa said: "He says, Surely she is a cow neither advanced in age nor too young, of middle age ."(between that (and this

Even then, if they had taken any cow (fitting this description) it would have been .enough. But they pressed for more, so Allah made it harder for them

They said: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what her colour is" . Musa said: "He says, Surely she is a yellow cow; her colour is intensely yellow, giving ."delight to the beholders

Even then if they had taken any such cow, it would have been enough for them. But .they persisted (in asking for more details) and Allah made it even harder for them

They said: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, for surely to us the cows are all alike, and if Allah please we shall surely be guided aright". He said: "He says, Surely she is a cow not made submissive that she should plough the land, nor does she irrigate the tilth, sound, without a blemish in her." They said: `Now ."you have brought the truth

They began their search and found such a cow with an Israelite youth. He said: "I shall not sell it but for a

hide full of gold." Thereupon they came to Musa and informed him. He told them to .buy it. So they bought and brought it

And Musa ordered it to be slaughtered. Then he ordered them to strike the dead body with its tail. As soon as they did so, the murdered man rose from the dead, and said: "O messenger of Allah! Surely it is my cousin who had killed me, and not the man ".against whom he has lodged his claim

In this way, they knew who the killer was. Thereafter, a companion of the messenger of Allah, Musa, said to him: "There is a story behind this cow". He asked: "And what is .it?" He said: "(That) Israelite youth was very devoted to his father

And he purchased some goods, and came to his father (who was asleep) and keys were under his head. And he did not like to awaken his father, and cancelled the deal. :When his father woke up, he told him about it. The father said to him

Well done! Take this cow; it is a recompense for what you have lost.' " The ` messenger of Allah, Musa, said to him: "Look at the faithfulness and good deed, where " '"?does it take its people to

The author says: The Tradition perfectly fit the description which we inferred from the .verses

A Philosophical Discourse About Making The Dead Bodies Alive And About Metamorphosis

This chapter describes several miraculous signs in the stories of the Israelites and the others - for example, parting the sea and drowning the followers of Pharaoh (And when

We parted the sea for you, so We saved you and drowned the followers of Pharaoh . . .); giving death to the Israelites by thunder-bolt and then raising them again from .(" . . .dead (And when you said: "O Musa! we will not believe in you

Making the clouds to give shade over them and sending for them manna and quails (And We made the clouds to give shade over you . . .) ; making the streams to gush out from the rock (And when Musa prayed for drink. . .); lifting the mountain over them (. . . and lifted the mountains over you . . .); transforming some of them into apes (. . . so We said to them: "Be apes. . . ") and bringing a dead body back to life by hitting it with a part of a slaughtered cow (So We said: "Strike the [dead body] with part of the . ("[. . . [sacrificed cow

Among the non-Israelites, there are many stories of dead men and / or animals brought back to life - for example, a large group that had fled their homes for fear of death (Did you not see those who went forth from their homes. . .) ; a chosen servant of Allah who passed by a ruined town (Or like him who passed by a town and it had fallen down upon its roofs. . .) and the birds which were raised from

dead through the agency of Ibrahim (And when Ibrahim said: "My Lord! show me how .(. . . Thou givest life to the dead

Altogether, there are twelve miracles, most of them occurring among the Israelites. The Qur'an has narrated them; and we have already shown that miracles do occur, and super-natural events do take place. We have also shown that such happenings .are not in conflict with the system of the cause and effect

It was clearly proved that it is not justified to interpret the verses of miracle in such a way as to deny their apparent meanings. Of course, the miracle is not related to an inherently impossible proposition, like dividing three in two equal wholes, or birth of a .child that would be his own father

But if something is possible in itself and the Qur'an says that it did happen, one should .not try to explain it away as an allegory or a metaphor

However, some miracles, like raising someone from dead and transformation, that is, metamorphosis, require a somewhat detailed study because they are sometimes .criticized from philosophical point of view

Objection: It is an accepted fact that if an existent thing, a being, having a potentiality of perfection, converts it into actuality, then it is impossible for it to retrace its steps and turn that actuality back into the same potentiality. Likewise, a more perfect being .does not change, in its forward march, to a less perfect one

When a man dies, his soul is released from the fetters

of matter; he becomes an immaterial “idea” or a spiritual being. Both these stages are above the matter; the existence in these planes is much stronger than that in the .material sphere

Therefore, it is impossible for a soul - once death has separated it from the body - to re-establish its connection with that material body. Otherwise, it would mean that a thing, having converted its potentiality into actuality, again retrogressed to the same .potentiality - and as we have explained above it is not possible

Also, man is on a higher level of existence than that of the animals. Therefore, it would .be impossible for a man to change, by metamorphosis, into an animal

Reply: Accepted that once a potentiality is turned into reality it cannot be regressed to the self-same potentiality. But raising someone from dead in this world, as well as .metamorphosis, is outside the domain of this law

Perception and reason show that a vegetable substance, when consumed by an animal, proceeds to its ultimate perfection, that is, animality, and takes the animal form. This form in itself is an incorporeal and immaterial thing. Having reached this stage, the vegetable has turned its potentiality into actuality. Now it cannot turn back .to vegetable kingdom

The animality is the fountain-head of the animal's conscious actions and perceptions. When it performs a deed an impression is outlined on its psyche. When it indulges in the same activity over and over again, that impression gets deeper and deeper until it becomes an ineradicable

.trait

This new trait may become the building block of an animal species with pronounced characteristics; for example, the fox with its cunning, the pig with its lascivious lust, .the panther with its predatory stalking

If, on the other hand, it fails to acquire any characteristics, the psyche remains at its original level of simple animality. It is like the case of a vegetable which fails to reach .the threshold of animality and remains at the original level of vegetable-kingdom

Likewise, an animal, becoming a part of a human being, progresses forward on the path of humanity. A human being has the capacity of perceiving his self in absolute incorporeal terms. When it thus changes its potentiality to this actuality, it is im… .possible for it to go back to the self-same potentiality

The humanity too, by repeatedly doing a certain type of deed, acquires especial traits and characteristics - and it creates various kinds of human beings with their particular .properties in the same way as happens in animal kingdom

Now, let us suppose that a dead man was returned to life in this world, and his soul re-established its relation to the matter, that is, the body. Obviously, it would not affect the incorporeality of the soul - it was incorporeal in the first life, remained so after .that connection was severed, and would remain in this second life too

Body is the tool by which the soul carries on its material and intellectual activities, just as an artisan makes articles with the help of

his tools and equipments. When the man died, the soul lost that tool; when he was revived the soul regained the possession and control of that tool.

Now, it may use that tool to acquire new talents, to attain to a higher level of perfection than before. It cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be said to be a retrogression or a retreat from perfection to imperfection, nor is it a change from reality to potentiality.

Objection: The scenario given above entails perpetual compulsion, which is obviously a false and void proposition. An incorporeal and immaterial soul, separated by death from the body, does not have any more potentials of acquiring further perfection through re-establishment of its relation to the body.

Remember that only a negligible number of people are claimed to have risen from the dead. And the multitude of human beings remain unrevived. If it were in their nature to acquire new perfections through re-establishing their link with their bodies and - yet they were denied that opportunity, they would be perpetually deprived of what their nature demanded. And this perpetual deprivation is nothing but perpetual compulsion.

Reply: There is no compulsion involved here at all. The soul has already progressed from its potentiality to the actuality. It reached a certain level and died. Now, at present it does not have any more potentiality. It will continue to possess the actuality it has already acquired.

Let us suppose that there is a man who did some good and some bad deeds, and then died.

Had he remained alive he could have added to his deeds and acquired a somewhat different spiritual form, either lovelier or uglier than before.

Likewise, if he is returned to life, he may acquire better or worse traits than before. But if he is not revived, then he already owns his actuality, and will accordingly be rewarded or punished in al-Barzakh, until he acquires a spiritual form according to his earned qualities.

Even then, if he is returned to this world, he would get new potentiality for spiritual perfection, and may acquire another spiritual form by using the material tool, for example, his body. But, if he is not returned, there is neither any potentiality nor any question of compulsion, perpetual or otherwise.

We should not forget that mere deprivation of a possible perfection is not a compulsion. Otherwise, every happening in this world could be called a perpetual compulsion. Every event, every development here affects each and every thing of the universe, directly or indirectly.

There is a never-ending struggle and conflict going on in the universe; and it affects the whole system - including the ability of a man to fully attain to his perfection. That effect may be beneficial or harmful. But nobody claims that because he was prevented, by the circumstances beyond his control, from obtaining a possible benefit, he was under perpetual compulsion.

If a talent for a certain perfection is ingrained in someone's nature and then he is prevented from achieving it, either by some factors in his own

nature or some external forces bent on nullifying that talent, then only it may be called a perpetual compulsion - because in this case, putting that talent or potentiality .in that species be a vain thing, an aimless venture

Now we come to metamorphosis. If a man's figure is transformed to that of a pig or an ape, it is just an external change. He is still a man in the form of an animal; not that .his humanity was erased and replaced by the nature of pig or ape

We have already described that when one repeatedly carries on an activity, its impression is etched on one's psyche. When a man repeatedly indulges in debauchery, his psyche turns into that of a pig; and it is not impossible for that figure to appear in his facial features in this world too - as it would certainly appear in the next world. Such a man is still a man, albeit a transformed one; not that he has lost his .humanity

By the way, we sometimes read, in the newspapers and magazines, reports of academic conferences in Europe and America that tend to prove that it is possible to revive a man after his death, and that a man's facial figures may change to something else. Of course, we do not base over belief on such news and reports; nevertheless, .we expect our adversaries not to forget today what they had read yesterday

Poser: Then there is no difficulty in believing in transmigration of the

.souls

Reply: There is a world of difference between metamorphosis and transmigration of the souls. In metamorphosis the same body changes its figure to look like something else; while the believers in transmigration of the souls say that a soul, after attaining its perfection and leaving the body, establishes a new connection with a new body.

Obviously, it is an impossible proposition. A question may be asked whether or not the new body was already connected to a soul of its own. If it already belonged to another soul, it would entail domination of one body by two souls, which is impossible - two persons cannot have one body, nor can one body be governed by two personalities.

If, on the other hand, the body did not have a soul already, it would mean that an accomplished and developed soul was burdened by an unaccomplished and undeveloped body. It would certainly be a regression from actuality to potentiality - just like returning a wise old man to his infancy! And this too is impossible.

Also, it should be apparent from what we have explained that it is certainly impossible for a human soul, after leaving its human body, to be incarnated in a vegetable or animal body. In short, the belief in transmigration of the souls entails impossibility after impossibility.

An Academic And Ethical Discourse On Unquestioning Adoption Of Concepts And Rulings

The nation, most frequently described in the Qur'an, is that of the Israelites; and the prophet most numerously referred to therein is their prophet, Musa (a.s.), son of `Imran. His name has been mentioned in

one hundred and thirty six places, twice as many as the second most numerously mentioned name, that is, of Ibrahīm (a.s.), who has been named sixty-nine times only (- as some people have calculated.(١

It is not difficult to understand the reason for these frequent references. Islam, the true religion, is based on the belief of monotheism; its present foundation was laid by Ibrahīm (a.s.) ; and Allah completed and perfected it for His Prophet, Muhammad :(s.a.w.a.), as He says

(the faith of your father Ibrahīm; He named you Muslims before and in this . . . (٢٢:٧٨ . . . .

And the Israelites were the most disputatious and most querrelsome of all the nations; they were the most obstinate and most abstruse of all when there was a .question of submitting to the truth

And the heathens of Arabia, whom the Prophet of Islam had to contend with, were of :the same mould, so much so that Allah said to His Prophet

Surely those who disbelieve alike is to them whether you warn them or do not warn .(them, they will not believe (٢:۶

Every vice, every depravity found in the Israelites could be found in them; they, in .their hard-heartedness and impertinence were the mirror-image of the Israelites

Ponder over the stories of the Israelites, as narrated in the Qur'an; look at the picture of their characters and morals as it emerges from those narratives. You will find a .nation deeply submerged in sensualism and materialism

They did not believe in what was beyond the

.Vide al-Muyamu '١-mufahris, by Muhammad Fu'ad `Abdu'١-Baqi -١

reach of their external senses; for them spiritual happiness was a word without meaning; their only ambition was the pursuit of sensual pleasure; their eyes could not focus on intellectual progress or spiritual perfection, so their only aim in life was the .material development

And to this day, they have not changed a whit. It was this tendency which made their mind and will totally subservient to the matter and the material phenomena. They did not understand except that which they could see, hear, touch, taste or smell; they did .not strive but for some tangible and material goals

Their servitude to the sensual phenomena prevented them from accepting any thing outside the domain of the five senses - even if it was truth; their thralldom to matter encouraged them to accept every thing told by their materially advanced big bosses - even if it was false. It created a clear contrariety and inconsistency in their words and .deeds

They condemned every adoption of others' concepts, ridiculing it as blind following, if that concept was unperceivable by the external senses - no matter how correct it was. And at the same time, they appreciated every adoption of others' concepts, labeling it as the pleasure of life, if it conformed with their material base desires - no .matter how wrong that concept was

This trait became deeply rooted in their psyche during their long sojourn in Egypt, where the Egyptians humiliated them, enslaved them and castigated them; they subjected them to severe torment, killed their

.sons sparing their daughters, and in this was a great trial for them from their Lord

However, it was this deep-rooted trait which made them heedless to what their prophets and divine scholars told them about what was good for them in this life as well as in the hereafter. (Remember their disputations with Musa and others!) And these very people were ever ready to accept and follow what their big bosses called .them to, for gratification of their worldly desires

Today the truth and reality has been afflicted by this very tragedy. The modern civilization, presented to the humanity by the western world, is likewise based on .sensual perception and material outlook

It is not prepared to accept any proof for something which is not perceivable by the external senses; and does not ask for any proof of validity, if a thing gives materal .and sensual pleasure

This has resulted in weakening of the hold of human instincts, and in disappearance of deep knowledge and high morals from our society. This trait has exposed the edifice of humanity to ruin, and is confronting the society with chaos and disorder. And you .will surely see its real face in a not too distant future

Actually, not every proof is asked for, nor every unquestioning adoption of others' ideas and concepts is objectionable. Man proceeds on the road of perfection through his intentional activities. His actions emanate from his will, and the will springs from .thought and notion

Thinking, therefore, is the foundation of his perfection. Man

depends on practical or intellectual cognition to which his perfection is directly or indirectly related. This cognition creates in his mind the need for individual or collective actions; this knowledge leads to intention and will which produces the .desired activity

Man, by his instinct, tries to find out the cause of every event, happening inside or outside his self. He does not do any action without knowing its reason; he does not .accept any theory without ascertaining its proof

It is his unfailing trait; he always looks for the cause of the events and actions; it is his nature and the nature never deviates from its set course. But this trait puts an unbearable burden on him. No individual can accomplish all the academic and .practical processes required for his material and spiritual well-being

It is this burden which led the man to establish a society and cooperate with other human beings. Various people were given responsibilities to perform various tasks, in order that the society, taken as a whole, might collectively accomplish all tasks, and .fulfill all the needs of all its members put together

Human needs are expanding by leaps and bounds; various branches of knowledge - sciences, technologies, arts etc. - are growing larger and larger, to such an extent that every subject has grown into hundreds of subjects - each requiring its own .specialists

Look for example, at medical science. In old days it was a branch of physics; now it has branched out into hundreds of independent subjects, and no

.single physician or surgeon may gain expertise in more than one or two of them

This vast multitude of special fields has instinctively led man to limit his inquiry for cause, and his search for proof, to only those branches of knowledge in which he has gained some expertise; and accept and follow the verdicts of other specialists in other .fields

A sane person invariably always relies on the experts in the fields of their expertise. The confidence in their expertise creates a certainty that what has been said or done .is correct; and this serves as the proof demanded by human nature

The nature dictates that man should try his best to find out the detailed proof of the rightness of his idea and action in the fields of his specialty; and as a corollary it directs that he should unquestioningly accept the concepts and verdicts of others in .other fields

In short, an ignorant man should follow the decree of a learned one. It is impossible for one man to be an expert in all the branches of knowledge, or independent in all the activities necessary for his life and well-being. Therefore, it is impossible for any man to be free from blindly following a lot of experts in numerous avenues of life. Anyone .claiming contrary to this, is a fool

Of course, it is a shame if a man remains content with unquestioning following, even where he can form an independent opinion based on detailed knowledge; as it is a shame if

p: ۴۲۱

he forms independent opinion without acquiring necessary knowledge. Both trends are undesirable, both are ruinous to a healthy civilization, both are dangerous to the .society

It is the prerogative of Allah that His decrees and orders be followed without any questioning, without any if or but; because He is the First and Final cause, an no other .cause or reason is needed when He has spoken

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۷۵–۸۲

point

(۷۵) أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَن يُؤْمِنُواْ لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلاَمَ اللّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِن بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

(۷۶) وَإِذَا لَقُواْ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ قَالُواْ آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلاَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىَ بَعْضٍ قَالُواْ أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُم بِمَا فَتَحَ اللّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَآجُّوكُم بِهِ عِندَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُون

(۷۷) وَلاَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ

(۷۸) وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلاَّ أَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلاَّ يَظُنُّون

(۷۹) فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَـذَا مِنْ عِندِ اللّهِ لِيَشْتَرُواْ بِهِ ثَمَناً قَلِيلاً فَوَيْلٌ لَّهُم مِّمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَّهُمْ مِّمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ

(۸۰) وَقَالُواْ لَن تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلاَّ أَيَّاماً مَّعْدُودَةً قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِندَ اللّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَن يُخْلِفَ اللّهُ عَهْدَهُ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

(۸۱) بَلَى مَن كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيـئَتُهُ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

(۸۲) وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

Do you then hope that they would believe in you? While a party from among them indeed used to hear the word of Allah, then altered it after they had understood it, and .(they know (this) (۷۵

And when they meet those who believe they say: "We believe"; and when they are alone

one with another they say: “Do you talk to them of what Allah has disclosed to you that they may argue with you by this before your Lord? Do you not then understand?” .((۷۶

What! Do they not know that Allah knows what they conceal and what they proclaim? .((۷۷

And there are among them illiterates who know not the Book but only lies, and they do .(but conjecture (۷۸

Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands and then say: “This is from Allah ”, so that they may sell it for a small price; therefore woe to them for what their .(hands have written and woe to them for what they earn (thereby) (۷۹

And they say: “Fire shall not touch us but for a few days. ” Say: “Have you taken a promise from Allah, then Allah will never fail to keep His promise, or do you speak .(against Allah what you do not know?” (۸۰

Yea! whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, these are the inmates of .(the Fire; in it they shall abide (۸۱

And (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, these are the dwellers of the (garden; in it they shall abide (۸۲

Commentary

The context shows that the unbelievers, and especially those of Medina, thought that the Jews were the likeliest people to help and support the Apostle of Allah at his advent. The pagan tribes of Aws and Khazraj lived with the Jews of Medina, and they knew that

the latter followed a divine religion and a revealed book. Thus it was not too much to .expect them to believe in the latest in the series of divine religions and books

This was the basis of their hope that the Jews would accept the Apostle of Allah as the true prophet, and would strengthen the cause of religion, and actively participate in the propagation of truth. But no sooner did the Prophet migrate to Medina than the Jews showed their latent hostility. The hope was shattered and the expectation .turned to disappointment

That is why Allah addresses the believers, saying: "Do you then hope that they would believe in you?" Concealment of truth and alteration of divine words was their deep-rooted life-pattern. Why wonder if they go back on what they used to say before the ?advent of Islam

Qur'an: Do you then hope . . . and they know this: The speech is now addressed to the Prophet and the believers, referring to the Jews in third person. This same style was used in the preceding story of the Cow, because the Jews had omitted the event from the Torah. These verses continue that mode of address because it exposes their habit .of altering and manipulating the divine book

Qur'an: And when they meet those who believe . . . and what they proclaim: The two conditional clauses, "when they meet those who believe" and "when they are alone one with another" are not in opposition to each other - as were

:the clauses in the verse

And when they meet those who believe, they say: “We believe”; and when they are alone with their Satans, they say: “Surely we are with you, we were only mocking (۲ :۱۴) .

Here the two clauses simply describe two instances of the Jews' transgressions and :ignorance

First: They indulge in hypocrisy, showing that they have accepted Islam, and trying in .this way to protect themselves from trouble, ridicule and even death

Second: They want to deceive Allah, forgetting that He is the Knower of the seen and .the unseen, Aware of what they conceal and what they proclaim

We may infer from the verses that the Jewish laity in Medina sometimes talked openly with the believers, telling them of some of the foretellings about the Prophet or .giving them some information that proved the truth of Islam and its Prophet

But their leaders used to admonish them for it, telling them that it was a thing revealed to them, it should not be disclosed to the believers, lest they argued with the Jews before the Lord – as though if the believers did not argue with them before God, !He would not know of it

Such thinking implies that Allah knew only the apparent, not the hidden and concealed things or thoughts. Allah refuted this foolish idea and said: “What! Do they not know ”?that Allah knows what they conceal and what they proclaim

It is our, and not God's, knowledge which is limited to the seen and does not comprehend the

unseen, because our perception depends on the senses which in their turn depend on body organs – equipped with nervous instruments, surrounded by space and time, .influenced by a hundred other material causes

This talk also throws light on the materialistic outlook of the Israelites. They were so steeped in that belief that they applied the human limitations to God too. They .thought that God was present and active inside the matter and prevailed over it

But that presence and that control and management were based on the same principles as a material cause brings out and controls a material effect. Such a belief was not a specialty of the Jews; it was and is held even by those followers of Islam .who believe in fundamentality of matter

For these people, God's life, knowledge, power, choice, will, decree, order and management have the same meanings as do their own life, knowledge etc. It is a disease for which there is no cure. And the signs and warnings can avail nothing to a .people who do not understand

Such views have made Islam a laughing-stock in the eyes of those who have no access to the true faith and correct Islamic knowledge. Those detractors say: The Muslims ascribe to their Prophet the saying, “Allah created Adam in His likeness”; and .these followers of the Prophet have created a god in the likeness of Adam

One group of the Muslims ascribes to its Lord all the qualities of the matter. Another group does not understand anything of

God's beautiful attributes; consequently it reduces all divine attributes to negatives. It says that the names and adjectives, which are used for both God and His creatures, .have quite different meanings in both cases

When we say, "God is Existent, Knowing, Powerful and Alive", the words denote some divine qualities totally incomprehensible to us, completely different from the .meanings they have when they are applied to a human being

Therefore, it is necessary to reduce these words to their negatives. What the above sentence, for example, means is this: "God is not non-existent, not unaware, not ".powerless and not lifeless

Such explanation implies that they believe in that which they do not understand, worship that which they are uncertain about and invite others to believe in that which .neither they nor anyone else knows anything about

The word of truth is enough to dispel such falsehoods. The people have been admonished by the true religion to hold fast to the essence of reality and steer clear .between the above-mentioned two extremes

They should know that Allah is not like His creatures, nor is He a set of negative propositions. The true religion directs common people to believe that Allah is a thing, unlike other things; that He has knowledge, unlike our knowledge; power, unlike our power; and will, not produced by contemplation; that He talks, not with a mouth; and .hears, not with ears

As for the people of higher understanding, they must ponder on His signs and acquire deep knowledge of His religion. He has

:said

Say: `Are those who know and those who do not know alike?" Only those possessed .(of understanding shall bear in mind (۳۹:۹

The people of higher understanding are not equal to a common man in their knowledge of truth and religion; likewise, the two are not alike in their respective responsibilities. This, therefore, is the teaching of religion for both groups ?respectively; it is there for them to follow, would they do so

Qur'an: And there are among them illiterates who know not the Book but only lies and one who does not read or write) is related = (الأميّ) "they do but conjecture; "al- Ummiyy .(mother = (الأم) "to "al-umm

It is as though the excessive love of the mother prevented her from entrusting her child to a teacher to teach and train him; consequently he could learn only from his .(lie = (الأمنيه) "is plural of "al-umniyyah (الأمانى) "mother. "al-Amainiyy

The verse says that some of the Jews were literates who did read and write the book - but making alterations in it; and the rest were illiterates who knew nothing of the .book except the lies of the former group

= (الويل) "Qur'an: Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands . . . : "al-Wayl .(to sell = (الإشتراء) " 'woe, disaster,, severe punishment, adversity, affliction) ;"al -ishtira

Qur'an: therefore, woe to them for what their hands have written . . . : The pronouns may refer either to all Jews or only to the interpolators among them. If

the former view is taken then the woe and condemnation would cover the illiterates .too

"Qur'an: Yea! whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side. . . "al-Khatī'ah translated here as "sins") actually refers to the psychical condition resulting = الخطيئه) from evil-doing. That is why the verse speaks first of his evil-doing and then of the effects of the sins besetting him on every side. When he is beset by his sins on every side, there should remain no opening for the guidance to reach him; he, therefore, will .go to Hell and abide there forever

Had there been an iota of faith in his heart, or some good traits like justice in his character, it would have been possible for the rays of guidance to penetrate to him. The overwhelming besetting of sins on every side, therefore, is possible in case of :polytheism, as Allah says

Surely Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and ;(forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases (۴:۴۸

:and also in case of disbelief and denial of the divine signs, Allah says

And (as to) those who disbelieve in and belie Our signs, they are the inmates of the .(Fire, in it they shall abide (۲:۳۹

In short, the earning of evil and being beset by sins on all sides is a broad expression .covering all that would make one to abide in the Hell forever

:The two verses under discussion are almost similar to the verse

,Surely those who believe

and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabaeans, whoever believes in .(Allah and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward . . . (۲:۶۲

Both show that the basis of salvation and eternal happiness is the true belief and good deeds. The only difference between the two sets of the verses is that the verse ۲:۶۲ shows that mere taking to oneself nomenclatures like the Muslim, the Jew etc. is of no use; while the verses under discussion show that mere claiming of salvation is of no .worth at all

Tradition

al-Baqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, And when they meet those who believe . . . : " Some of the Jews (who were not inimical to the Muslims and were not a party to the Jewish conspiracy against them), on meeting the Muslims, used to narrate what the Torah contained of the description of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.); so their elders forbade :them to do so and said

Do not inform them of what the Torah contains of the attributes of Muhammad ` (s.a.w.a.), lest they argue with you by that before your Lord.' Thereupon, this verse (was revealed."(۱

It is narrated from the fifth or the sixth Imam that he said about the words of Allah, friendship, overlordship) = الوِلايه) Yea! whoever earns evil . . .. "If they deny the wilayah of the Leader of the faithful, then they are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall (abide."(۲

The author says: ash-Shaykh at-Tūsī has

Majma `u'l-bayan -۱
al- Kafi -۲

narrated in his al-Amalī a tradition of nearly the same theme. The two Tradition are based on the principle of the "flow" of the Qur'an and fit the verse on one of its best example. Allah has counted the love of, and submission to, the Prophet's family-members as a good deed, as He says:

Say: "I do not ask of you any recompense for it except the love for (my) near relatives; and whoever earns good, We give him more of good therein (۴۲:۲۳).

Also, the tradition may be taken as another explanation of the verse, as we shall describe in the Chapter ۶ (The Table) that "the good" means complying with the demands of the belief of monotheism. If so, then the tradition particularly mentions `Alī (a.s.) because he was the first of this ummah to open this door.

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۸۳-۸۸

point

(۸۳) وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِى إِسْرَائِيلَ لاَ تَعْبُدُونَ إِلاَّ اللّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَاناً وَذِى الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَقُولُواْ لِلنَّاسِ حُسْناً وَأَقِيمُواْ الصَّلاَةَ وَآتُواْ الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِّنكُمْ وَأَنتُم مِّعْرِضُونَ

(۸۴) وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لاَ تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءكُمْ وَلاَ تُخْرِجُونَ أَنفُسَكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ

(۸۵) ثُمَّ أَنتُمْ هَـؤُلاء تَقْتُلُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقاً مِّنكُم مِّن دِيَارِهِمْ تَظَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِالإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِن يَأتُوكُمْ أُسَارَى تُفَادُوهُمْ وَهُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاء مَن يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنكُمْ إِلاَّ خِزْىٌ فِى الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَهِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

(۸۶) أُولَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُاْ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالآَخِرَهِ فَلاَ يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

(۸۷) وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ

وَقَفَّيْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لاَ تَهْوَى أَنفُسُكُمُ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ
فَفَرِيقاً كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقاً تَقْتُلُونَ

(٨٨) وَقَالُواْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ اللَّه بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلاً مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ

And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship (any) but Allah and (you shall do) good to (your) parents, and to the near of kin and to the orphans and the needy, and speak to men good (words) and keep up prayer and pay the zakat. " Then you turned back except a few of you and (now too) you turn .(aside (٨٣

And when We made a covenant with you: "You shall not shed your blood and you shall not turn your people out of your cities;" then you gave a promise while you witnessed .((٨۴

Yet you it is who slay your people and turn a party from among you out of their homes, backing each other up against them unlawfully and exceeding the limits; and if they should come to you as captives, you would ransom them - while their very turning out was unlawful for you. Do you then believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other? What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement, and Allah is not at all heedless of what you do

.(۸۵)

These are they who have bought the life of this world for the hereafter, so their .(chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be helped (۸۶

And most certainly We gave Musa the Book and We sent apostles after him one after another; and We gave `Isa, the son of Maryam, clear evidence and strengthened him with the holy spirit. What! whenever then an apostle came to you with that which your souls did not desire, you were insolent, so you called some (of them) liars and some .(you slew (۸۷

And they say: "Our hearts are covered." Nay, Allah has cursed them on account of .(their unbelief- so little it is that they believe (۸۸

Commentary

Qur'an: And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship (any) but Allah. . . ": To begin with, the verse refers to the Children of Israel in ,third person, and then ends by addressing them in second person

Then you turned back . . . " The first sentence mentions making a covenant with them" - which must naturally be in words - then describes that covenant; this in its turn begins with a declarative sentence, "You shall not worship (any) but Allah", and ends ". . . up with some imperative ones, "and speak to men good words

When the stories of the Israelites began, they were addressed in second person, because the verses contained a lot of admonition and reprimand; it continued to the ,story of the Cow when

because of demands of eloquence, it was changed to third person. Consequently, this verse too began with third person, but when time came to quote the verbal covenant, .the style reverted to the second person

You shall not worship (any) but Allah": It is a prohibition in the form of information." This style shows the utmost importance attached to the ban by the speaker – it is as though the speaker has no doubt whatsoever that the order shall be complied with, .and that, in this case, the servants will not dare to go near idolatory

The same style is continued in the next clause, "and (you shall do) good to (your) ".parents, and to the near of kin and to the orphans and the needy

The change over to second person, although resorted to for the purpose of quoting the covenant, has put the speech back to the original style and has linked the last clauses of the covenant to the fresh admonitary ones: "and keep up prayer and pay "... the zakat. Then you turned back

Qur'an: and (you shall do) good to (your) parents . . .: As translated here, it is a declarative sentence with the sense of imperative. It may also be translated as an imperative sentence: "and (do) good . . ." The verse gives in descending order of .importance, the list of those whom one should do good to

The parents are the root of man's existence, and nearest of all to him. Then come the

near of kin. Going outside the circle of relatives, the orphans are most deserving of kindness and beneficence, because in their small age they are deprived of their father .- their guardian, protector and bread-earner. Other needy persons come after them

orphan) is he whose father has died. = اليتيم) "Qur'an: "And to the orphans": "al-Yatīm The word is not used for him who has lost his mother. Also, it is said that a human child is called "orphan" if his father dies, but in animals, the adjective is used for one whose .mother dies

needy, = المسكين) is plural of al-miskīn (المساكين) "Qur'an: "And the needy": "al-Masakīn .(impoverished, destitue, lowly

beauty, excellence) is an =حُسناً) "Qur'an: "and speak to men good (words)": "Husnan infinitive verb, used for adjective (beautiful, excellent, good) to give emphasis. Some .(beautiful, excellent, good = حَسَناً) reciters have recited it hasanan

However, the sentence enjoins them to speak nicely to the people; it is an indirect way of ordering them to maintain good social relations to behave with people nicely, gently and good-manneredly - no matter whether the opposite party is a believer or .an unbeliever

It cannot be said to be abrogated by the verse of fighting, because the two verses are not contradictory to each other; the place and time of social contact is other than the place and time of fighting. For example, using hard words when admonishing a child .to correct his behaviour is not contrary to maintaining good social relation

Qur'an: "You shall not shed your

blood. . . ": This too is a prohibitory order, in the form of an information - the same style which was used in, "You shall not worship (any) but Allah". "as-safk (السّفک = to shed blood).

Qur'an: backing each other up against them: "at-Tazahur (التظاهر = to help each other). Az-Zahīr (الظهير = helper); it is derived from az-zahr (الظهر = back) as though the helper strengthens the back of the helped one.

Qur'an: while their very turning away was unlawful for you: Its literal translation will be, `while it was unlawful for you their very turning out.' The pronoun "it" is not related here to any previously mentioned noun etc., it is a pronoun used to begin a sentence. In the verse,

Say: "He, Allah is one" (۱۱۲:۱),

the pronoun "He" has the same grammatical significance.

Qur'an: Do you believe in a part of the Book . . . : Why should you follow the rule of paying ransom for them and disobey the prohibition of turning them out? Are not both rules in the same book? Do you believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other?

Qur'an: And We sent apostles after him one after another: "at -Taqfiyah (التقفيه = to send someone after someone else).

Qur'an: and We gave Isa son of Maryam, clear evidence: This subject will be dealt with in Chapter ۳, (The Family of `Imran).

Qur'an: And they say: "Our hearts are covered": al-Ghulf (الغُلف) " is plural of al-aghlaf. It is derived from ghilaf (الغلاف =

cover). They say: Our hearts are protected under various covers and veils - your call cannot reach our hearts. The sentence has the same import as the verse:

And they say: "Our hearts are under coverings from that to which you call us (۴۱:۵).

Tradition

Abu Ja'far (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, and speak to men good (words): "Speak to men the best of that which you would like to be said about yourself."(۱)

As-Sadiq (a.s.) said about this verse: "Speak to men, and do not speak but good until you know what it is.

al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "Speak to men the best, of that which you would like to be said" about yourself; for certainly Allah, Mighty and Great is He, dislikes an abuser, curler, speaker of evil against the believers, indecent, shameless (and) begger, and He loves the modest, mild-tempered, chaste (and) moderate."(۲)

The author says: A tradition, similar to the first one, has been narrated in al-Kafī from as-Sadiq (a.s.) with another chain of narrators; and similarly in al-`Ayyashī.

Another tradition, like the second one has been written from the same Imam in al-Kafī; and one like the third is narrated from al-Baqir (a.s.) in al -`Ayyashī. Apparently these meanings of the "good word" have been inferred from general usage.

As-Sadiq (a.s) said: "Verily Allah sent Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) with five swords: So (there is) a sword against a dhimmī (الذِمـّیّ = free non-Muslim subject of an Islamic country). Allah said: and speak to men good (words); it was revealed about the dhimmīs,

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۱- al-Kafi

۲- Ma`ani 'l-akhbar

,then it was abrogated by another verse

(Fight those who do not believe in Allah. . . (۹:۲۹)(۱)

The author says: In this tradition the Imam has taken the “speech” to mean behaviour. We say: Do not speak to him but good; what we mean is: Do not deal with him but in a good and decent manner. This meaning will apply only if we take the word, “abrogated” in its terminological sense. But it may also be taken in its literal sense (as we shall explain under the verse:

;(Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten (۲:۱۰۶

and in that case this verse will not be in conflict with that of the fighting. It should be pointed out that such uses of words in their literal meanings (as against their terminological ones) are not infrequent in the Tradition of the Imams.

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۸۹-۹۳

point

(۸۹) وَلَمَّا جَاءهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُواْ مِن قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ فَلَمَّا جَاءهُم مَّا عَرَفُواْ كَفَرُواْ بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّه عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

(۹۰) بِئْسَمَا اشْتَرَوْاْ بِهِ أَنفُسَهُمْ أَن يَكْفُرُواْ بِمَا أنَزَلَ اللّهُ بَغْياً أَن يُنَزِّلُ اللّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ عَلَى مَن يَشَاء مِنْ عِبَادِهِ فَبَآؤُواْ بِغَضَبٍ عَلَى غَضَبٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

(۹۱) وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُواْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللّهُ قَالُواْ نُؤْمِنُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرونَ بِمَا وَرَاءهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقاً لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنبِيَاء اللّهِ مِن قَبْلُ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

(۹۲) وَلَقَدْ جَاءكُم مُّوسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَنتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

(۹۳) وَأُشْرِبُواْ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ إِيمَانُكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ

And

al-`Ayyashī -١

when there came to them a Book from Allah verifying that which they have, and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved, but when there came to them that which they did recognize, they disbelieved in him; so Allah's curse .(is on the unbelievers (۸۹

Evil is that for which they sold their souls – that they should deny what Allah has revealed, out of envy that Allah should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His servants He pleases; so they returned with wrath upon wrath, and there is a dis- .(graceful punishment for the unbelievers (۹۰

And when it is said to them, "Believe in what Allah has revealed," they say: "We believe in that which was revealed to us;" and they deny what is besides that, while it is the truth verifying that which they have. Say: "Why then did you kill Allah's prophets .(before if you were indeed believers?" (۹۱

And most certainly Musa came to you with clear evidence, then you took the calf (for a .(god) in his absence and you were unjust (۹۲

And (remember) when We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain over you: "Take hold of what We have given you with firmness and listen (to Our words)". They said: "We hear and disobey." And they were made to imbibe (the love of) the calf into their hearts on account of their unbelief. Say: "Evil is that which your belief bids .(you if you are believers" (۹۳

Commentary

Qur'an: And

p: ۴۳۹

when there came to them a Book: The context shows that "a Book" refers to the .Qur'an

Qur'an: and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved: It appears that whenever the pagans of Arabia clashed with the Jews, the latter prayed for victory by the right of the Prophet, and by his prophethood and emigration; and that this was their usual custom before the advent of the Prophet, so much so that ."even the pagans knew it of them. It all is implied in the word, "they used to

Qur'an: but when there came to them that which they did recognize: They knew that Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was the awaited Prophet, because all the attributes and particulars mentioned in their books fitted on him perfectly. And yet they denied his .truth

out of envy) is in = (بغياً " Qur'an: Evil is that for which they sold their souls. . .: "Baghyan accusative case, explaining the reason why they disbelieved in Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) .even after recognizing him

What they did was "out of envy", "that Allah should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His servants He pleases" was the object of their envy. "So they re... turned with wrath upon wrath", that is, they returned doubly enraged. It may also mean that they invited double wrath of Allah upon themselves – the first because they .disbelieved in Torah and the second because they disbelieved in the Qur'an

The verse says that they were partisans of the Prophet long before he was

born; they prayed to Allah for victory by his name and his Book. When the Prophet was sent and the Qur'an was revealed, they very well recognized that he was the Prophet in whose name they used to pray for victory, and whose coming they .awaited. But they were overwhelmed by envy and arrogance

No sooner did the Prophet begin his call then they denied his truth, and forgot all that they used to tell about the awaited prophet. It was not surprising as they had earlier disbelieved in Torah too. Thus they committed disbelief after disbelief, and invited the .wrath of Allah upon themselves, not once but twice

Qur'an: and they deny what is besides that: That is, they claim that they do not believe .in any book other than Torah; but the fact is that they do not believe even in Torah

Qur'an: Say: "Why then did you kill Allah's prophets. . . ": The conjunctive, "then", serves to relate this question to their claim, "We believe in that which was revealed to us". If this claim of yours is correct then why did you kill the prophets of Allah? And why did you disbelieve in Musa by taking the calf for a god? And why did you say, "We hear and disobey", when We took a promise from you and lifted the mountain over ?you

Qur'an: and they were made to imbibe (the love of) the calf into their hearts: "al-Ishrab" (الإشراب = to make to imbibe, to make to drink).

Instead of saying `the love of the calf', the verse says, “to imbibe the calf”, for emphasis, as though they had drunk the calf itself into their hearts. The sentence thus contains two metaphors – “the calf” for the love of the calf, and imbibing into hearts .for loving

Qur’an: Say: “Evil is that which your belief bids you. . . ”: It is a derisive expression ridiculing them for their killings of the prophets, their disbelief in Musa and their arrogance in committing sin after sin and then claiming that they were the true ?believers. The verse tauntingly asks them: Is this what your belief bids you

Tradition

As-Sadiq (a.s.) explained the verse, and when there came to them a Book from Allah verifying that which they have. . ., in this way: “The Jews found in their books that Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), the Messenger of Allah, would migrate and settle between `Ayr and Uhud. So, they went out looking for that place. They passed by a mountain called :Hadad(١); and they said

Hadad -and Uhud are the same'. So they dispersed nearby; some of them settled at` Tayma', and some others at Fadak and yet others at Khaybar. Those at Tayma' once desired (to see) some of their brethren (at another place). A Bedouin from (the tribe .(of) Qays passed by them and they hired (his camels

He told them: `I shall take you from between `Ayr and Uhud.' They told him: `When you pass between the two, tell us.' When they reached the

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In the printed copy of at-Tafsīr of al-`Ayyashī (vol. ١, p.۴٩) and what has been - ١ quoted from him in al-Bihar (vol. ١۵, p.٢٢۶), al-Burhan (vol.١, p.١٢٨) and Majma'u 'l-bayAn (vol. ١, p.١۵٨) the name has appeared as Hadad. But we could not find such a name in geographical dictionaries. Perhaps it is a corruption of Hadad which is a mountain overlooking Tayma'; (see Makamu 'l-bayann, vol. ٢, p. ٢٢٩; al -Qamūs, vol. (.١, p. ٢٨٧ and Taju 'l-'arūs, vol. ٢, p. ٣٣٣) or it may be another reading of Hadad.(ed

land of Medina, he said: `That is `Ayr and this is Uhud.' They descended from his :camels and said to him

We have now found (the place of) our desire; now we do not need your camels, you` may go wherever you wish.' Then they wrote to their brethren at Fadak and Khaybar: '.`We have found the place, come therefore to us

They wrote in reply: `Now we have settled in this place, and have acquired properties; and we are so near to you. Therefore, when it will happen (i.e., when the '.Prophet will come to Medina), we shall rush to you

Those Jews acquired properties in the land of Medina. When their wealth increased, its news came to the ears of Tubba'(١) and he attacked them. They fortified themselves and he laid siege to them. (And they used to take pity on the weekly soldiers of Tubba` and throw dates and barley to them at night. This came to the (notice of Tubba` and he softened towards them.(٢)

He assured them of their safety and they came down to him. He told them: `I do like this place of yours and I am inclined to settle down here.' They said: `It is not for you. It is the migration place of a prophet; and no one may settle down here until that '.happens

Thereupon he said: `Then I am leaving among you some of the members of my clan, so that when it happens they shall help and assist him.' Thus he left behind

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١- الـتُّـبّـع (at -Tubba`) was the title of the kings of Yemen.

٢- The sentences in parenthesis are not in al-Mīzan. They have been added from the quotation of al-`Ayyashī, given in Bīharu '١-anwar, vol. ١۵, p.٢٢۶. (m)

.the two tribes you see today, the Aws and the Khazraj

When these two (tribes) increased in number, they used to grab the properties of the Jews. At that time, the Jews used to warn them: `Oh! When Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is '.sent (by Allah) we shall certainly turn you out from our town and properties

But when Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was sent as Prophet, it was the Helpers (the Aws and the Khazraj) who believed in him and the very Jews denied him! This is the meaning of ,the words of Allah

(and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved. . . ”(١)

Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hatim and Abū Na'aym (in hisDala'ilu 'n-nubuwwah) have narrated from Ibn `Abbas that he said: “The Jews used to pray for victory against the Aws and the Khazraj by the right of the Messenger of Allah, before .he was sent as prophet

However, when Allah raised him from the Arabs, the same Jews disbelieved in him and denied what they used to say about him. Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Bishr ibn Bara' ibn :Ma'rūr and Dawūd ibn Salamah told them

O Jews! Fear Allah and accept Islam; because it was you who used to pray for` victory against us by the right of Muhammad, while we were polytheists, and you '.used to tell us that he would (soon) be sent, describing to us his attributes

Salam ibn Mushkīm, one of the tribe of Banū an-Nadīr, said to them: `He has not brought to us

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۱- Al-`Ayyashī

anything we know; and he is not the prophet we were telling you about.' Then Allah :(sent down (the verse

(And when there came to them a Book from Allah . . . ' "(١)`

Abu Nu'aym has narrated in his Dala'ilu 'n-Nubuwwah from the chains of `Ata' and ad-Dahhak, from Ibn `Abbas that he said: "The Jews of Banū Qurayzah and Banū an-Nadīr, before Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was sent as prophet, used to pray to Allah for :victory, invoking Him against the disbelievers and saying

O Allah! We seek Thy help, by the right of the untaught prophet, to let us triumph` over them.' And they were given victory. But when there came to them that which they did recognize (i.e., Muhammad - s.a.w.a.), and actually they had no doubt (whatsoever about him, they disbelieved in, and denied him.(٢

.The author says: Similar Tradition have been narrated by various other chains also

A commentator, after pointing to the last mentioned Tradition and others like them, says: "These Tradition - weak as their narrators are and incompatible as they are with the narrated Tradition - are anomalous in their meaning too, because they maintain that the prayer for victory was made `by the person of the Prophet' or, as some Tradition say, `by the right of the Prophet'; and such a prayer is against the sharī`ah; and no one has any right on Allah. How could prayer be offered with the help of such a ?non-existent right

Reply: This objection results from not understanding the meaning of

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ad-Durru '۱-manthūr -۱

ad-Durru 'l-manthūr -۲

right" and oath. Oath is used to join and bind a proposition, order, request or" exclamation to an honourable and sublime thing - if that proposition etc. is wrong, the .honour and sublimity of the thing bound to it, is tarnished and damaged

When you say, "By my life, Zayd is standing", you have bound the honour of your life to the truth of your statement; if that statement be wrong, your life would loose its honour. When you say, "By my life, I shall do this work", or "I entreat you, by my life, to do this work", you have, in the same way, put the honour of your life at stake for that work; if you did not do it, or if the second party did not heed to your entreaty, your life :would loose its honour, its dignity. Two things emerge from this explanation

First: Oath is the strongest method of emphasizing a talk, as the scholars of literature .have confirmed

Second: The thing by which one swears, must be more honourable and more important than the proposition etc. which it is related to; because a proposition cannot be emphasized with the help of a less important thing. Allah has sworn, in His Book, by .His own name and attributes

,For example, So, by your Lord

.(We would most certainly question them all (۱۵:۹۲

:Also, He quotes others swearing by His name and attributes

;(By Allah, our Lord . . . (۶:۲۳

Then by Thy Might I will surely make them live an evil life

.(۳۸:۸۲)

But He has also sworn by His Prophet, His angels and His books, as well as by His creatures like the heaven, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the night, the day, .the mountains, the rivers, the towns, the man, the tree, the fig and the olive

It could not be possible unless these things had a real dignity of their own bestowed on them by Allah; every such thing must have an attribute reflecting one of the divine attributes, or an activity related to the divine sublimity and every dignity and honour .emanates from Him

Now, what objection can be raised against a suppliant, if he prays to Allah for something entreating Him by one of the above-mentioned things - considering the fact that Allah Himself has sworn by those things and has given them a sublimity and ?dignity

Why an exception should be made in case of the Apostle of Allah only? Is it not an affront to the Prophet to remove him from this common way of showing respect? By my life, Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah (s. a. w. a.) is not less honourable in the eyes of Allah than an Iraqi fig or a Syrian olive! These people forget that Allah Himself has :sworn by His Prophet

.(By your life! They were blindly wandering on in their intoxication (۱۵:۷۲

Now we should have a look at the "right". Right, as opposed to wrong, means a factual ,thing, existing outside imagination, like the earth and the man; in short

every real and substantial thing, as opposed to illusory and imaginary ones. Monetory and other social rights come within this category because they are firmly established .by the society

The Qur'an has nullified all the rights claimed by man, except that which is laid down and confirmed by Allah - in creation as well as in legislation. Right in the legislative and social spheres is that which Allah Himself has established, like the monetary rights, .the rights of the brothers and the rights of the parents etc

It is necessary to mention here that no one can lay down a right against Allah; no one can make it incumbent upon Allah to do or give something. But it is possible for Allah to make it incumbent upon Himself to do something, or to give someone something, all in the sphere of legislation. Then that "someone" shall have a right on Allah which Allah .Himself has established

:For example, Allah says

;(even so (now) it is a right on Us(that) We deliver the believers (۱۰:۱۰۳

And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles: Most surely they shall be assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall (be the victorious ones (۳۷:۱۷۱-۱۷۳

The assistance, promised here, is general and unconditional, not restricted by any proviso. Getting deliverance is the right of the believers on Allah, and getting assistance is, in the same way, the right of the apostles. By establishing this right on Himself for the apostles, Allah has enhanced

.their dignity and honour

And there is nothing to prevent a suppliant from entreating Allah to help and deliver him from his difficulties, by the right of His apostle or apostles. Allah Himself has laid down that right and He Himself swears by every honourable thing, showing us that .such oaths and adjurations are in fact liked by Him

In short, there is no hitch in entreating Allah by His Apostle or by the right of His Apostle. The same applies to entreating Him by His friends, or by the right of His friends. He has established a right for them on Himself that He will surely assist them .in the path of happiness, with every related assistance

The claim that "no one has any right on Allah" is just nonsense. Of course, no one can lay down a right for himself on Allah; no one can make it incumbent on Allah to do some thing. But a suppliant does not pray to Allah by a right forced on Allah by someone else; he pleads to Him by a right which He Himself has established pledging .His Own word; and His Promise is never broken

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ۹

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ۲۰۰۷, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

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Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

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Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

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Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

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Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

:Address of the central office
Isfahan, Abdorazaq St, Haj Mohammad JafarAbadei Alley, Shahid Mohammad HasanTavakkoly Alley, Number plate ۱۲۹, first floor
Website: www.ghbook.ir
Email: Info@ghbook.ir
Central office Tel: ۰۳۱۳۴۴۹۰۱۲۵
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